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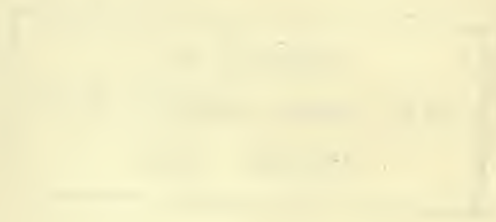




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THE
HALLOWED SPOTS
OF
ANCIENT LONDON.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, SON, AND TAYLOR,
BREAD STREET HILL.

THE
HALLOWED SPOTS
OF
ANCIENT LONDON.

HISTORICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, AND ANTIQUARIAN SKETCHES,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF PLACES AND EVENTS
AS THEY APPEARED AND OCCURRED IN THE OLDEN TIME.

BY ELIZA METEYARD.

51695
1901

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
CHARLES GRIFFIN AND COMPANY,
10, STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1870.

TO

CHARLES ROACH SMITH, Esq. F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATIONS OF ROMAN LONDON," "COLLECTANEA ANTIQUA,"

"THE ANTIQUITIES OF RICHBOROUGH, RECVLVER, AND LYMNE,"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

IN TESTIMONY OF LENGTHENED FRIENDSHIP,

AS WELL AS LITERARY OBLIGATION,

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED BY HIS MOST SINCERE FRIEND,

ELIZA METEYARD.

P R E F A C E.

As the city of their empire, and the central spot on which the great battle of their civilization has been fought, London must ever have a peculiar interest to Englishmen ; and any attempt to clothe its long past scenes anew with vivid picturesqueness, and to evoke the dead to play once more their mighty part in the human drama, cannot fail of some degree of interest. So far as these pages go, I have striven to effect this ; whether successfully it is not for me to judge. Yet, for the first time perhaps, apart from special histories, I have brought together a vast number of curious facts relating to its churches and chapels, its halls and streets, its prisons and houses, as also of the lives of those who hallowed them by potential services, of which the memory can never die, at least with those who know what such services effected for the advance of civil and religious freedom, for breadth of thought, and purity of moral life. Such questions are necessarily dear to Englishmen, for these it is which, in practical effect, have made their name illustrious, and their country the haven and resting-place of all less happy in the possession of these priceless blessings.

The book is intended for all parties and denominations ; for the groundwork of religious and civil truth is a resting-place for all. For though Puritanism, as the great religious fact of the seventeenth century, is variously referred to, it was but the development of reformation in religion—a phase of a great ascending truth ; and it must also be recollected that our Church accepts and entertains at this hour most of those principles for which the Puritans contended ; this so much so, that but a few questions of formula divide the greater portion of the body of professing Christians. For the rest, there is but one sentiment in the breasts of all true-born English men and women—invincible attachment to the precious liberties their fathers won, pride for the country which is theirs, and love for a queenly rule, which, combining order with liberty, is known and revered by all the nations of the earth. Possessing these advantages, willing to preserve them, and to bequeath them augmented and confirmed to the generations who follow us, it is but natural that we should admiringly trace back these blessings to their source, and view again their hallowed scenes, if only as incentives to ourselves to do as “our fathers did in the old times before us.” As men, we reverence our civil and religious rights ; as Englishmen, we cherish them.

The materials of the book have been gathered from many rare sources, and such as are not easily accessible to the general reader. I therefore hope that it will be found useful as a book of reference on many points. It contains much curious information now for the first time brought together, and the result of research and labour extending over a lengthened period. The descriptive portions will, I think, be found for the most part essentially correct, as I made constant reference, whilst the book was in progress, to the unrivalled collection of Old London maps in the British Museum ; and these, for any vivid and

real delineation of London during the latter half of the sixteenth, and the whole of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have a value far surpassing that of books.

During the progress of the work I was variously indebted to the authorities at the State Paper Office, Duke Street, Westminster, in relation to some researches respecting the prison of Sir John Eliot, in the Tower ; and to those connected with Dr. Williams's Library, for the use of several rare tracts and sermons, especially for one of the latter, preached by Dr. Thomas Goodwin, after the Fire of London. My thanks are also due, for many kindnesses and courtesies, to my very old and much valued friend, William Howitt, Esq. ; to my ever zealous friend, Charles Roach Smith, Esq., F.S.A., the eminent antiquary and scholar ; to T. Duffus Hardy, Esq., her Majesty's Deputy-Keeper of Records ; to Peter Cunningham, Esq. ; Charles Gilpin, Esq., M.P. ; the Rev. J. Abbiss, M.A., Rector of St. Bartholomew the Great, in Smithfield ; and Cyrus R. Edmonds, Esq. Nor can I let this opportunity of acknowledgment pass without testifying to the uniform courtesy and kindness which now for many years I have received from all those officially connected with the literary department of the British Museum. To me the privileges of research and study have been priceless, as they are to all those who accept and use them in a fitting spirit. Our National Library, conducted as it is, confers as much honour on the country as it adds dignity to the profession of letters.

I have but to add, that I see so clearly what the great principles of civil and religious freedom have effected for our country and our race, as to have penned some deeds and things herein with an admiring reverence I cannot express in words. I glory in the name of Englishwoman, and every question, whether

social or political, the former especially, which affects the vital interests of our dear country, has a vividness and an interest for me, far beyond those which are personal and near. In this spirit of reverence for what is true, I place the book in the hands of its readers.

E. M.

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THE

HALLOWED SPOTS OF ANCIENT LONDON.

INTRODUCTION.

THE CITY AND ITS SITE.

To one of a nation which has produced the finest landscape painters and the best descriptive poets, it is not difficult to imagine London under several of its ancient aspects. Aided by local and historical knowledge, the Englishman may stand upon the City bridges, or on the Southwark shore of the Thames, and draw correct and striking pictures of the ancient scene. Correct, because guided by knowledge ; picturesque, because London under any of its changing aspects, and more particularly under its earlier ones, could but show the beauty of both its site and its immediate neighbourhood.

We have it before us in its primitive aspect. The Thames—wider than it is now, for it entered the ocean at a much higher point—flowed between either shore of the present counties of Middlesex and Surrey, as swift and as clear a stream as rivers under tidal influence usually are. A marsh, portionally overflowed at high-water, formed the Surrey foreground ; the Middlesex shore was undulating meadow-land, varied here and there by breadths of primeval trees ; and these lent their shadow, and dipped their branches often into the stream itself. Lesser streams emerged from the gloom of the woods, and flowed down by turf banks into the river ; whilst at the rear stretched a dense woodland, forming a portion of what was afterwards known as the forest of Middlesex. This woodland extended on either side ; to the west towards the swampy site of the present Westminster, to the east towards the marsh now known as the Isle of Dogs—at one period or another covered with trees of gigantic growth, which, swept down in some great convulsion of nature as a whirlwind or an earthquake, are found—even occasionally at this day—root upwards in the soil.

To the north of this forest scene rose a heathy upland, of which the present Hampstead Heath formed a small portion. This probably was never more than partially wooded, as considerable portions of the soil bear few signs of the detritus of forests, but alternate gravel and swamp were only capable of nourishing a scanty undergrowth. Towards the east, dense woods again covered the site of the present Islington, and so stretched away to that part of the Middlesex forest now known as Enfield Chase. Such was the primitive aspect of the site of the great modern city of the world—a wilderness varied by stream and upland, precisely as may be seen at the present day in New Zealand, or the more remote states of North America, where Nature, fresh from the Eternal hand,

“Sits lovely in her native russet.”

The Celtic or Iberian successors of those pre-historic races of which antiquarian and ethnological research is gathering up so many traces, may have at first settled down upon the muddy shore to the east of the future Londinium; and thus, facing as it were an open estuary at high-water, laid by degrees the foundations of a little community of fishers and traders. For that the Thames met the ocean at a point very much higher than at present, is no mere matter of hypothesis. The low levels of the Essex and a portion of the Kentish shore, the vast embankments of the Romans in an after-day, and the nature of the soil, afford unmistakable evidence; in fact, the whole of the eastern shores of England have undergone extraordinary changes. The estuary of the Garruenos, like that of the Thames, swept at the date of the Roman invasion over a vast area now covered by towns, villages, and broad levels of verdant marshland.* Tacitus himself tells of this uncontrolled dominion of the ocean on our shores. “Nor is it on the sea-coast only that the flux and reflux of the tides are perceived; for the swell of the waves forces its way into the recesses of the land, forming bays and islands in the heart of the country, and foaming amidst hills and valleys, as in its natural channel.”†

London, under its Roman masters, occupied at first but a confined area; as the traces discovered of its earliest circumvallation and of sepulchral deposits in such situations as Bow Lane, Moorgate Street, and Bishopsgate Within, would show.‡ The centre may be taken at about the top of the modern Fish Street Hill; whilst its northern wall ran probably along the course of what is now Cornhill, and Billiter Street.§ But these limits were in time greatly overrun, and a new wall of most massive construction—and as it remained far into the Middle Ages—was built round an immensely extended area, from the Tower in the east, to Ludgate in the west. A bridge was thrown across the Thames—uniting the great northern to the southern

* Ives *Garianonum*. 8vo. 1774.

† Illustrations of Roman London, by C. R. Smith, p. 12.

‡ Vita Agric. cap. 10.

§ Ibid. p. 12.

road—through the vast forest of Anderida—and so to the ports which gave such ready access to the shores of Gaul. An amphitheatre stood without the walls of Ludgate, and from certain indications somewhere about the site of the old Fleet Prison; and the western end of Watling Street, as well as the acclivity of Ludgate, south and west, were crowned by temples and public buildings. “A statue in bronze of Hadrian, of heroic size, was one of the public ornaments of London* ;” and from such scanty evidence as can be afforded by architectural fragments, we are led to the conclusion that Londinium vied with the provincial cities as much in architecture as she excelled them in commercial opulence. The streets seem to have been narrow and continuous; whilst the northern and north-eastern parts of the town were occupied by magnificent villas. Of these the hypocausts, the tessellated pavements, the wall-paintings, alike with the fragments of pottery and of works in bronze, attest to the wealth and civilization of Roman London. In possession of the latter, Londinium must have rivalled, or rather far excelled the Roman cities of Gaul and Germany, if the specimens dredged up from the bed of the Thames at the time, and since the rebuilding of London Bridge, be taken in evidence. More than one of these—as Mr. Roach Smith has well said—“is a masterpiece of ideal grace and beauty.”† It may be that its abundance of iron and other metals, gave to Britain a pre-eminence in the art of casting, during a portion of the time at least that it existed as a Roman province; and that its producers of works in metal were as numerous a body as the smiths of the Norman era.

But these results of wealth and civilization passed away as the figments of a dream—though not we believe without leaving as residue a physical heritage, which, in its best points of culture and mixed race, is with us at this hour. Nor, may we be sure, did such an era pass by without there being gathered up into that great oblivion which has no voice, efforts and sacrifices and self-abnegations as noble as well as memorable as any as it is our purpose to here set down. For man’s noble and godlike acts are limited to neither creed nor age.

A period of darkness follows, to lighten which, we have little but monkish fables; though containing within them some portion of real fact, we may be sure. When the veil is lifted, and the dim light of historic truth again assists us, London is in the hands of a people too rude to appreciate the material results of culture, too fierce to be awed by any magnificence which might still exist in the ruins of temple, amphitheatre, or forum; for they, whom neither the rough sublimity of the waves and tempests of their native seas, or the gloom of dense forests, could awe, were to be touched by little but the superstitious terrors of their heathen creed. But when they begin to settle down, when the noblest tendencies of their race towards freedom and citizenship begin to shape out practical ends; then—and it is curious to mark it—the

* Illustrations of Roman London, p. 65.

† Ibid. p. 68.

London of later times, both as regards locality and institutions, may be seen arising, as we see in the newly germinated acorn, the future oak. In the year 306, London is, according to the Saxon Chronicle, first inwalled; that is to say, the breaches in the mighty Roman wall are repaired, and no great while after, the Saxon citizens become Christianized, and found St. Paul's, upon the ruins of the great heathen temple. Then variously—through two centuries—comes apparent retrogression of several kinds, till in the year 839, London is destroyed by the Danes. But they are conquerors and masters whose blood, language, and institutions give much more to posterity than they destroy. Peace again settles down with our great Alfred; St. Paul's Minster and Westminster Abbey are magnificently raised from their burnt ashes, and the vicissitudes and changes of some century and a half bring us to Norman times, and a new phase in the civil and religious history of London.

In this history, the natural results of Papal domination and the power of the Church, gradually appear; religious orders and monastic institutions rise up on every side, and, though less prominently, civic wealth and civic freedom make important and substantial progress. In the year 1176, the citizens of London found their bridge of stone; in 1190* one of their number, Henry Fitz-Alwine, a Norman, is constituted mayor; in 1224 an important point is gained for constitutional justice—the law courts of England are permanently established in Westminster Hall; in 1297 the forest of Middlesex is disafforested, and the citizens build houses and form gardens without the walls; in 1355 they send for the first time four citizens to Parliament, and thus make civil progress in proportion as spiritual domination decays; the result of which is eventually the Reformation, and its great changes.

In looking over the quaint "bird's-eye view" of London drawn fifteen years after the Reformation by Ralph Aggas,† the rural aspect of the city, at that date, is strikingly curious to a generation who only know London as one enormous area of bricks and mortar. Though the Reformation, through changing the ownership of so much of the city land, had already given a great impetus to building both within and without the walls, large portions of it must have yet borne more the appearance of country villages scattered amidst woodland, than a city capable of losing, as it had in the previous century, at least, according to Stow, as many as 30,000 inhabitants at once by the plague. A large portion of the space near the eastern wall seems occupied by lanes and gardens, other spaces are similarly covered, and many of the conventual gardens are of great size. Looking beyond the walls, open fields lie east and north of the Tower; next comes the great swamp beyond Moorgate, which was not drained till 1606–7; next is the open space of Smithfield with fields beyond; and then Holborn, stretching from the postern of Newgate, wears the appearance of a wide country road,

* Cunningham. Liber Albus gives this date as 1189.

† *Civitas Londinum Ano. Dni. circiter MDLX.* By Ralph Aggas.

with its brook, bursting from the ground somewhere about the spot known as Holborn Bars, flowing downwards to the river Fleet. Gardens and fields lie at the rear of Holborn on either side; extensive fields or gardens cover much of the site of the present Chancery Lane, though a narrow thoroughfare existed there from a remote date, for it connected the property of the Knights Templars; whilst the Strand, from the Temple to Charing Cross and from thence to the Palace at Westminster, wore the same rural aspect as Holborn, with the exception that towards the river the palatial dwellings of the nobility stood amidst extensive gardens in an almost continuous line.

Thus the ancient city of London was a growth of site upon site; each one influencing, more or less, the condition of its successor. Like the language and physical being of its people, it was the product of a variety of circumstances; and like as with the growth of the national laws and constitution, the aggregation of benefits was slow. Yet for this reason, that it was one old foundation raised upon another, or that the dust of one generation made the floor that the next should tread, it was none the less worthy of the hallowing influence of human goodness in so many forms. Already at that day when Ralph Aggas drew his "bird's-eye view," its narrow streets, its wide areas, its churches, its markets, its prisons, as well as other places within and without its walls, had been hallowed by "suffering for truth's sake." Citizens without number had given, like apostles, of their wealth, and had, whilst extending their rights as freemen, effectually resisted the exactions of both kings and nobles. The people had curtailed the power of an arrogant and greedy Church, and received from Wycliffe doctrines of priceless worth. For his faith in these Sautre had perished in the first of the iniquitous fires of Smithfield. The Reformation had been, and the block and the stake had each received its victims, More, Fisher, and Thomas Cromwell, Askew and Rogers. Then came the reign of the great Elizabeth and the policy of her illustrious statesmen. When this was closed the quaint old plan must have been in a measure obsolete, by reason of the city's growth and prosperity; yet in succession events and actors followed, which consecrated London as never city was consecrated before. Patriotism is rather a virtue connected with past ages, when the city or the state was a boundary large enough for the widest secular hopes and fears; whilst, abstractedly considered, particular instances of human greatness rather crown the advancing points of civilization, than carry it directly onward. Great actors and great thinkers proclaim the advancing points of immortal truths; but it is we, the lesser people of every day, who, through our rectitude, our faith, our self-abnegations, have to turn these truths to practical account. Still with all this—still with what advancing knowledge and science sublimely teach—that ours are no narrow bounds, for the Universe is ours—something ennobling, call it prepossession, or love, or patriotism, or what we may, glows through the heart and quickens its pulsation as we

tread this city of our fathers, consecrated by so much genius, so much worth, so much of righteous endurance in the cause of secular and of religious truth. To show what these have done for us, let us now pass on with reverential feet and grateful circumspection.



THE GROUND BEFORE LONDON WAS BUILT.

CHAPTER I.

SMITHFIELD: ITS MONASTERY AND ITS MARTYRS.

WE will first proceed through one of the four ancient city gates—that of Ludgate—to Smithfield. Not to behold it, as in Aggas's plan, nearly surrounded by houses, and its eastern portion covered by a stately building and precincts, in use within a few years past, as one of the most important of the city monasteries, but to see it as Smithfield was in the early part of the twelfth century.

It was then the western and firmer portion of that great morass which extended as far east as Bishopsgate, and north to the high ground of Islington. Though intersected by more than one brook, abounding in springs, and possessing a pool so large, that Stow, nearly four centuries afterwards, calls it a "great water," there were portions raised above the level of the bog, as William Fitzstephen, who wrote in this twelfth century our earliest account of London, calls it, "a certain smooth-field—*campus planus*—immediately in the suburb," and mentions, further, that it was even then used for the purposes of a noted show of well-bred cattle held every Friday, unless such were a solemn festival. From this use, probably, arose its name Smithfield, or the field of smiths, as numerous small forges for shoeing horses were scattered round it at an early date.

Except on the occasion of these shows, it must have been a wild and solitary spot, and one of ill repute; for here, beside a cluster of elm trees, a probable remnant of the primeval forest, the citizens had from time immemorial set their public gallows. It was on this, respectively in 1305 and 1330, that Wallace and Roger Mortimer were hanged. Yet on this waste, shut out from the cheerful dwellings of men by the city walls, and open to the miasmas of the great fen, Christianity set up her divine ark, as in countless other places of desolation and evil name. One Rahere, or Raherus, a Norman by his name, after passing the flower of his youth amidst the licentiousness of the soldier's camp and the feudal castle, for he was minstrel to King Henry I., was "penytant of hys synnes." That it is to say, from purely physical causes, the mind rose superior to low tastes and sensual inclinations, as in similar cases of men of strong intellect and fine imaginative powers. Had he lived in the seventeenth century, instead of the twelfth, he might have imagined "the mountains of the shining ones," given proof of consummate statesmanship, or believed that neither church nor priest is necessary when man desires to hold pure and reverent com-

munion with his God. As it was, and be it recollected, no one can act in great matters uninfluenced by the spirit of his age, he went to Rome, and returning thence, began his work of founding a hospital and a church near the borders of the desolate fen without the northern walls of London. We have an account of this in one of the earliest and most valuable of the old English manuscripts* preserved in the British Museum. It is not illuminated, and is, probably, of a date anterior to the time when the *scriptoria*, or writing rooms of the great monasteries, sent forth such marvels of penmanship and quaint mediæval illustration. But what is much better than dog-Latin, though garnished with gold-leaf and vermillion, the good old scribe, credulous as a child, sat down with his pens, his leathern inkhorn, and his sheets of parchment, to write from a full heart in the simple vernacular he spoke, and he succeeded so as even here and there to give little points and touches worthy of the hand of Chaucer.

Rahere was a "man," this old monk tells us, "sprung and born of low kynage (kindred)"—and it excites at once our sympathy in his favour, as well as proves to us how early was this democratic element introduced into the Church; and how it thus, connecting priest and laymen, was one of those indirect yet gathering influences destined so vitally to serve the cause of both spiritual and civil freedom. Unlike the mailed Bohuns and Montgomeries of his day, whose death, and even living penitences, were of such rich account to the Church, the poor minstrel had neither wealth nor land to give. Feigning himself an idiot, he collected daily a little band of children, lepers, and poor people, and with their aid in gathering stones from the waste and morass around, he began in 1102 to lay the foundation of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew; which, refounded and enriched, is at this day one of the noblest and oldest charities of London. He affected this infirmity of intellect, it is supposed, for the double purpose of procuring assistance, and concealing from his enemies, those possibly the sycophants he had left behind him in the household of the king, what were his ultimate designs. An idiot in those ages, as it is well known, was superstitiously held to be under the especial providence of God; and he might thus, in the first instance, gain assistance that would not have been otherwise rendered. But the transformation effected displayed profound wisdom. "Truly this place," says this old chronicler in a passage which has been often quoted, but the spelling of which we modernize, "before his cleansing, pretended no hope of goodness. Right unclean it was, and as a marsh drear and fenny, with water almost everywhere abounding; and that, that was eminent and dry above the water, was deputed and ordained to be the gallows of thieves, and for the torment of others that were condemned by judicial authority."† This passage, when first considered, throws startling doubts upon the authenticity of the old monk's record. To set these at rest, at the date this book was written, we

* Cotton Lib. Vespasian, book ix.

† Ibid.

descended some excavations made for sewerage to the foundations of the cloisters of the Priory, and saw that they rest upon a thick bed of gravel; which extends, we were told, in all directions so far as the main buildings reach. Since then we have been assured by an eminent London antiquary, that both facts are undoubtedly correct. Smithfield was anciently, at least in portions, "a maryce dunge and fenny;" and Rahere founded both hospital and priory on spots "dry and eminent above the water." Indeed, the northern wall of London was in itself founded on the marsh, and parts within it were recovered therefrom; as Sir Christopher Wren, in building St. Lawrence's church, near Guildhall, was obliged to drive piles for the foundation.*

Rahere must in no great time have cast aside his assumed idiocy, and entered the service of the Church, for we find him using other eminently apostolic means for the work he had in hand. By "instructing with cunning of truth," "saying the word of God faithfully in divine churches," and by constantly exhorting "the multitude of clerks and laity to follow and fulfil those things that were of charity and almsdeed." These appeals were not made in vain, or his pious fame unknown even at court, for we soon find that "having the title of desired possession of the king's majesty, he was right glad. Then nothing he omitting of care and diligence, two works of piety began to make The church of comely stone-work tablewise, and an hospital-house a little longer off from the church, by himself he began to edify." With respect to the hospital, which was founded for the service of the poor, the sick, and pregnant women, with the care of such children till seven years old as lost their mother at birth, Rahere had a coadjutor from the beginning, one Alfun by name, "a certain old man, to whom was sad age with experience of long time." He was made first master; and the hospital seems thus to have possessed from the beginning a distinct jurisdiction of its own, free from all domination of the adjacent priory, saving that the master before election should be approved of by the prior, and after it swear obedience and fidelity to both the prior and the convent.†

The date differs as given by various authorities, but 1123 may be fixed upon as the time when the priory was finished, and Rahere, gathering a few brethren around him, assumed the office of prior of the canons regular of the order of St. Augustine, living within the precincts of the priory of St. Bartholomew, without the walls of London. Thus for twenty-one years had this man, "born of low kindred," wrought in the service of God and the people; and now, settled down near the gates of the populous city, he began anew, according to an old authority, to minister, to exhort, and to inculcate, not only in his church, but in the dwellings of the citizens. Surely no one, unless debased by a bigotry as abject as heathen superstition itself, but

* *Londinium Redivivum*, vol. iv. p. 23.

† *Newcourt's Repertorium*, p. 297.

recognises in this poor monk as noble a promoter of the civilization and humanity of his age, as Wycliffe and Luther of theirs. It was not one in which to speak or think of spiritual freedom. There was yet the intensest evils of barbarism to subdue: there was to inspire the powerful with more Christian sentiments, and to induce them to act with more justice in their relations to the weak; and there was to teach the oppressed themselves the duties of a moral life, and the hopes which lie beyond it. This was much to do; nor trivial work would it have been, amidst the licentiousness, the coarseness, the brutality of that age. "Surely a system," says Macaulay finely, "which, however debased by superstition, introduced strong moral restraints into communities previously governed only by vigour of muscle, and audacity of spirit, a system which taught the fiercest and mightiest ruler that he was, like his poorest bondman, a responsible being, might have seemed to deserve a more respectful mention from philosophers and philanthropists." It might; but not till lately has anything worthy the name of philosophy been brought to bear upon the facts of history; or historians been willing or indeed, apparently, able to trace beneath the superficies of the facts they recorded, a law of causation, which, whether considered in reference to the past or to the future, constitutes the great worth of history.

Life in that twelfth century was no easy thing, as we have said. Lying, backbiting, treachery, are vices especially of barbarous times, and Rahere in settling down in his priory seems to have been extraordinarily afflicted by troubles of this sort. "His household people," says the old monk, "were made his enemies; so was against him wicked men, and wickedness was laid to himself." They plotted against his life, whereupon he petitioned the king, who not only defended him but thenceforth added to the privileges of the monastery and hospital. Thus "strengthened and comfortably defended," he in due time died, after being prior of his house twenty-two years and six months, leaving his successors to raise above his dust the fine tomb which still exists, beautifully preserved, and worthy in itself a visit to the old church of St. Bartholomew the Great, in Smithfield. "He was a man," continues the old monk, "not having cunning of liberal sciences, but that that is more eminent than all cunning, for he was rich in purity of conscience; attached to God by devotion, to his brethren by humility, to his enemies by benevolence. . . . In feasts he was sober, and yet the follower of hospitality. Tribulations of wretches and necessities of the poor he opportunely admitted, patiently supported, completely relieved. *In prosperity not proud, in adversity patient; and whosoever that was unfortunate and came unto him he clipped to him within the bowels of his soul.*"* Making some allowance for the partiality of the old monk, or a pardonable desire to show to posterity the virtues of the founder of his house, this Rahere, the king's minstrel, could have been no common man; whilst he who thus wrote of him in a language now obsolete, possessed an

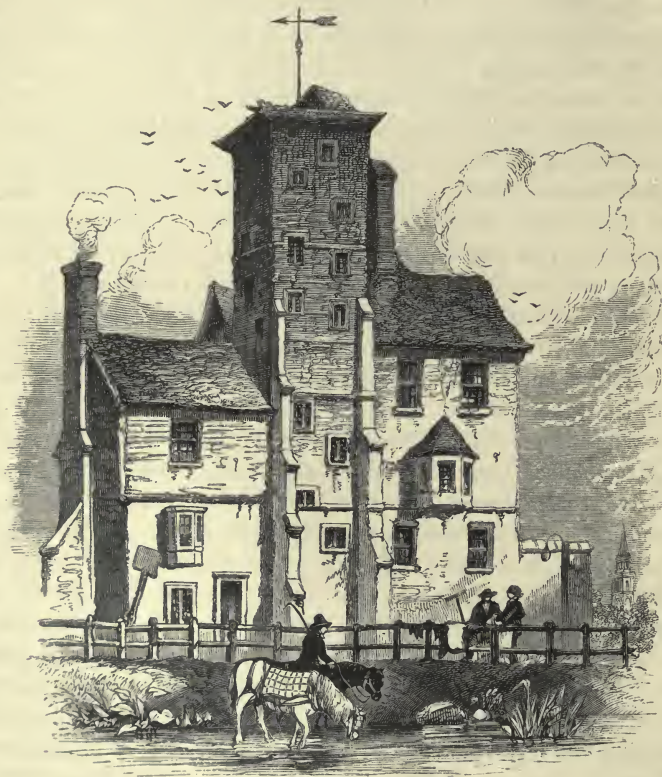
* Cotton Lib. Vespasian, book ix.

amount of exquisite feeling that in a more advanced age, might have warmed his lips to a poet's utterance. As it was, none *but* a poet could have felt or clothed in language, so intense an emotion of the human heart, as that of clipping suffering "within the bowels of his soul."

The precincts of the great monasteries so generally retained their original limits, that there is little reason to doubt but that those of the priory of St. Bartholomew occupied but one site through all the changes of subsequent centuries. There was much rebuilding and great additions made in 1410, and later still, just previous to the Reformation ; yet the present church of St. Bartholomew the Great, once forming the choir of the fine conventual church, bears traces of such a vast antiquity as to leave little doubt that much of it is the work of the founder's hand. These precincts included the conventual church, an adjacent chapel, cloisters, the refectory, the prior's house, extensive domestic offices, a burial ground, and a great extent of garden, much celebrated for its mulberry trees. As late as 1830, one of these yet remained, and during the last century, it was customary for the inhabitants of Cloth Fair and the adjacent Close, to sit beneath their shade in the summer evenings.

Thus after the death of Rahere the monastery flourished. With the exception of St. Paul's Cathedral, St. John's of Jerusalem at Clerkenwell, belonging to the Knights Hospitallers, and the Abbey at Westminster, it became the richest and most important of the six-and-thirty religious houses founded at different periods in London and Westminster, during the middle ages. It possessed the advowson of St. Martin's, Ironmonger Lane—a small church burnt down in the great fire ; the rectory and advowson of the vicarage of St. Sepulchre, besides lands at Acton in Middlesex, and manors in Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk. But its most interesting possession was that of the manor of Canonbury at Islington. This passed into the hands of the priors in the year 1253 ; and here, setting out a park, and building a country house, it became known as Canon-bury, or the house of the prior of the canons of St. Bartholomew. It was a favourite spot with them. They visited it often, probably by the old way of Clerkenwell, and remained there for days ; enjoying the luxury of its fine gardens, and the splendid view they had from thence of the picturesque old city. Equally pleasant was their view of Canonbury from the priory itself ; for it must have been a very conspicuous object thence, before houses stretched across the great fen, or surrounded the noted Clerks' Well of the middle ages. Though the old tower at Canonbury was not built till within a few years previous to the Reformation, and this by the most comfort-seeking of the priors, Prior Bolton, his predecessors had bestowed great and some of it very wise care upon this retreat. Taking advantage of the abundant and excellent springs of water for which Islington had been celebrated from time immemorial, they formed not only magnificent fishponds and even a bath in the gardens of Canonbury, but collected their contents

into conduit-heads, and conveyed the water thence by pipes to Smithfield, for the use of the priory and hospital. This must have been done at a very early date ; as in 1433, the master and brethren of the hospital began to pay a rent of six shillings and eightpence per annum for the free use of water from the conduit-heads of Islington. The old tower already referred to was undoubtedly built for the purpose of a better



CANONBURY TOWER.

view of London than that obtained from the adjacent manor-house ; and here, though only a stone's throw from his luxurious dwelling, with its wide staircases, its fretted stone-work, its fine panelling, Prior Bolton, it would seem, took up his lodgment completely, as the basement was used for the purposes of a kitchen ; and the upper storeys, each forming a single room, were used, there is little doubt, as his private

chambers. From the look-out on the embattled roof, then much higher than it is at present, a striking scene met his eye—the grand old city with its countless spires and orchard-like rusticity, the Tower, the river, and its green marshland; till the river itself widened into the Nore, and thence mingled its waters with the sea.

If such was the home of Prior Bolton's predecessors amidst the tranquil beauty of Islington, as it then was, greater luxury and state were theirs within the precincts of the monastery in Smithfield. As time progressed and wealth accumulated, their position in regard to the city of London must have assumed considerable importance. Though not connected with the baronage of England, as were the priors of St. John of Jerusalem at Clerkenwell, or aldermen of London, like the priors of the Holy Trinity without Aldgate, they undoubtedly shared in the civil business of the city, particularly in that which belonged to the administration of criminal justice. Their connexion with the earliest of the martyrdoms points out this fact. The "Elms at Smithfield," was for many centuries the great place of public execution. Here most of those who had committed offences either against the laws of the city or the realm, were brought to die. It was customary for them to receive their last shrift from the hands of the prior, at the great gate of the monastery, or rather of the conventual church. The nave of this, with aisles north and south, then fronted Smithfield with a magnificent western window; though whether divided from it by a wall is not known. Squalid shops are now built above the ponderous foundations of this nave; and the beautiful arch which at this day forms the entrance into St. Bartholomew's Close, then opened into its southern aisle. There must have thus been three entrances, a centre and two lateral ones, as seen in most of the great English cathedrals. From this nave, by a succession of splendid arches, stretched the choir, forming as we have already said, the present parish church of St. Bartholomew the Great. On either side were aisles opening from those of the nave; and these bending round the altar in a semicircle like the ambulatory of Westminster Abbey, still exists in a fine state of preservation. We advise the London reader to visit this grand old church, early on the Sabbath morning. If the impression made upon him be what it was upon ourselves, as we stepped down into the cool shadows of the south aisle of the choir, from the dust of Smithfield and a glaring July sun, it will repay a previous journey of fifty miles. Let it be understood that we have no admiration of a pompous ritual; not a particle of sympathy with the doctrines once preached there; ever present with us is an austere and vital protest against any form of sacerdotal power or faith, which attempts to put bondage on the human mind, or interpose a secondary will between the spirit of man and the spirit of his Maker; we would rather pray in temples not made by human hands—the hoar mountain-top, the shadowy woods, the shores of the boundless sea; we believe that neither time nor place is a necessary contingent of the truth and purity of prayer; and we further believe that underlying

all creeds, dogmas, and rules of faith runs a pervading unity of spirit, which connects man to man, and men to God. Still, for all this, it seemed to us upon that Sabbath morning as though the Spirit of Prayer met us, and hallowed the threshold of that ancient place ; as though the blessing of divine deeds still lingered ; as though the cool breezes sweeping down the aisle were untouched by the corruptions of a great city—even the corruptions of Smithfield ; as if the shadow of a Divine Love encompassed



THE CLOISTERS AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

all things ; as though what the mortal hands of man had raised up to the honour of the immortal God, could not be wholly desecrated or unhallowed ! Such was our impression on the threshold of St. Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield.

The prior's house still stands at the rear of the eastern wall of the choir. It is occupied partly as the dwelling, and partly as the manufactory, of a fringe-maker.

The wide chimneys and a portion of the great staircase yet remain, as likewise the fine flight of steps by which the priors reached their oratory, built above the northern aisle of the choir ; and to which Prior Bolton added the exquisite oriel window still extant with his quaint rebus—a bolt in a tun wrought in the stonework. The upper portion of the house, now ceaselessly trod by fringemakers, was the dormitory and the infirmary of the monastery. It is interesting still to trace the marks of the partition which divided the one from the other, and the little fire-place of the monks' sick chamber. Of course, such an arrangement must have been fraught with immense sanitary evils, particularly in connexion with the loathsome diseases of the middle ages, such as leprosy and scrofula, with the latter of which all monasteries were plague-ridden. But in those days, ventilation as well as domestic and personal cleanliness were things comparatively unknown ; and we who have seen a vast number of old places, castles, monasteries, halls, houses, and therein the squalid chambers, and the utter absence of ventilation and all means of decency, do not so much marvel that there were desolating plagues, as that one man in a thousand escaped.

Beside, and at the rear of the prior's house ran, there is reason to think, the famous mulberry-garden, as round the church itself was a grassy graveyard, decked with trees. For in a few rare prints still existing, one taken from the Froissart MSS., the others relative to Wat Tyler's rebellion, the priory walls are always shown as partly overgrown with trees. The churchyard was a celebrated place ; in it were held many of the great scholarly meetings of the middle ages—the scholars of one great monastic school disputing with another, on abstruse points of scholastic theology. Stow mentions one of these meetings—the scholars seated on the sward beneath the trees ; a portion of the disputants belonging to the celebrated school of St. Anthony, in Threadneedle Street, where Sir Thomas More received his education, and on the site of which now stands the Hall of Commerce.

Near the southern aisle of the choir stood the chapter-house, in which undoubtedly many matters relative to the great questions we are approaching were discussed. Near this, again, were the cloisters, of magnificent size and proportion, occupying the four sides of a square of a hundred feet, the central area verdant with the customary plot of turf. Portions of the eastern cloister alone remain ; these are buried amidst the filthiness of cowsheds, stables, knackers' yards, carpenters' shops ; part is turned into a saw-pit, the rest choked up with planks and ponderous beer-barrels. Yet amidst such desolation, enough remains of the exquisitely groined roof and springing arches, to give an idea of these cloisters in their original condition, and when they opened from the southern nave of the choir, with one airy Norman span of surpassing beauty. What exquisite places for meditative thought cloisters like these must have been ; and not, we may be sure, productive solely of debasing superstition and scholastic quibbles. Here, looking at history from an inductive point of view, more

important points than any contained in the *Analytics* of Aristotle were meditated, as the centuries drew near to that one of the great emancipation of the human mind; and though it is not all men that can speak out the truths that burn within their hearts, though the very creed of their Church made the casuistry of difference between belief and speech permissible, still here we think, within retreats like these, many of those priceless truths that Wycliffe preached and Sautre died for were meditated, and in time believed. Be it recollected as an axiom, that evils generate frequently their own remedies, and that from out of a nation of bondsmen arise the free; whilst never yet the corn grew, the harvest came, without the long and hidden germination of the seed.

In making a sewer beneath the pavement, some eight or nine years ago, a line of gigantic stone coffins was found, apparently running the whole length of the cloisters. It was not customary to bury the monastic dead thus, and therefore this discovery affords matter for antiquarian conjecture. We saw one of these in the earth, and yet occupied by its long and solemn guest; others then recently dug up were reared on end, with visible relics within them of Rahere's shaven canons, perhaps, amongst others, of him who had written of the man "born of low kindred," so quaintly, yet so well.

But the grandest feature of the monastery, exclusive of the choir, was the refectory. It was of great length and height, and perhaps coeval with Westminster Hall in its erection, had a wooden roof of equal beauty. It is now used as a tobacco manufactory, but traces yet remain of its former grandeur, though two distinct floors were long ago raised within what was once the entire space between pavement and ceiling. In this hall, with its raised dais, the priors of St. Bartholomew feasted the royal and lordly frequenters of those great tournaments so frequently held in Smithfield during the middle ages, and immortalized in the pages of Froissart.

But a change was at hand, though for the present power and possession were to seem triumphant. Since those days, when the apostolic minstrel had founded his Patmos in the "marsh dunge and fenny," power and luxury had debased the Church to an inconceivable extent. There were still within it "stern, pale-faced Churchmen, all chiselled out of the intellectual cast of temperament,"* but the majority, dead to real faith or service, sought only to add new blandishments to pompous rituals, to use power in many questionable shapes, and to give stringent proofs that their greatest industry now lay in the direction of rapacious acquisition. Their greed—one of the greatest proofs of degeneracy wherever it appears—is incredible. By the middle of the fourteenth century, nearly two-thirds of the entire area of London was covered by religious foundations, and nearly one-fifth of the whole population is supposed to have been associated with the religious communities.† So far from this state of things producing increased piety or learning, the great monastic schools had already begun to

* Verity on Civilisation, p. 75.

† Allen's London, vol. iii. p. 13.

decline, and the parochial churches, stripped of all revenue, except what came to them in the form of oblations laid upon the altars, were only too numerous served by an ignorant class of priests. The people, on the other hand, had made progress in many directions, especially in such as related to their civil rights. Much could not yet be said for the intellectual development of the majority, for to this the priesthood had not looked ; but better fed, better housed, beginning to feel the advantages of their jealously guarded rights, and of the acquisition of the property these rights secured, their resistance to the Church was not founded on doctrinal points, but on a determination to repress its greed and exactions, especially such as emanated from a foreign source. Thus their schism with the Church commenced on practical grounds of this kind. It was one eminently characteristic, and certain, not only to widen, but to lead to a more intellectual development of itself. In 1166, when a little band of Albigenes came over to this country from Germany, to disseminate their opinions with respect to the sacraments, baptism, and the institution of marriage, they met with no sympathy from the people ; others appeared in the following century, but with a like result. These latter, according to Knighton, were "burned alive," for as early as the reign of John, the stake, as a punishment for religious delinquency, was not unknown in this country. But by the time Wycliffe commenced his controversial warfare with the Dominicans at Oxford, the case was widely different. The desire to repress exactions had assumed a new development, and the great plague which had so lately desolated half Europe, led, if not to the generation of new opinions, at least to that condition of the popular mind eminently calculated for their reception and promulgation. Thus Wycliffe met with adherents everywhere. His citation to appear in London was followed by extraordinary results ; more than two-thirds of its inhabitants were converts to his opinions, and the translation and dispersion of copies of his Bible only increased and strengthened this new condition of the popular mind. As a proof of the eagerness with which the Scriptures in the new translation were sought, and the extent to which they were multiplied, no less than one hundred and fifty manuscripts, all written within the space of forty years from the time the translation was completed, were examined for the magnificent edition of Wycliffe's Bible, edited by the Rev. J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden of the British Museum, in 1850.

It must not be presumed that the clergy were either passive or unobservant spectators of these changes. Undoubtedly, at first they treated the reports of the growing "heresy" with that outward show of supercilious contempt, despotism generates ; but the case was soon otherwise. Unable to effect what their *animus* willed in regard to Wycliffe personally, it was directed against his doctrines and his writings. These were "put down," both during and after his lifetime, with all the effective stringency in their power ; and as soon as a new reign brought to their aid a

king willing to be their subservient tool for purposes of his own, this fear and bitter hate gave early evidence of what both were capable.

Hitherto the definition of, and the convictions for, heresy, had been confined to ecclesiastical courts and the canon law; for though what doctrines should be adjudged heresy was left by our old constitution to the determination of the ecclesiastical judge, the crown had a control over the spiritual power, and might pardon the convict by issuing no process against him—the writ *de heretico comburendo*, or the process of putting a convicted heretic to death by burning, being only issued by the special direction of the king in council. But a new time had arrived. Henry IV., son of John of Gaunt, the friend and disciple of Wycliffe, willing to secure his usurpation of the crown by the adherence of the clergy, transformed this old formula of the canon law into the common law of the country, and thus by an Act of Parliament, passed in January, 1401—seventeen years after the death of Wycliffe—sharpened the edge of persecution to its utmost keenness. By this statute, the diocesan alone, without the intervention of a synod, might convict of heretical tenets, and unless the convert abjured his opinions, or, if after abjuration he relapsed, the sheriff was bound, *ex officio*, if required by the bishop, to commit the unhappy victim to the flames, without waiting for the consent of the crown. Lollardy was also made a temporal offence, and indictable in the king's courts; which thereby gained, not an exclusive, but only a concurrent jurisdiction with the bishop's consistory.

It seems singular that this infamous statute should have passed without some opposition from the commons. None is on record; though so widely were Wycliffe's doctrines spread amongst the people, that only three years later, in 1404, the commons themselves, when called upon to grant supplies, proposed that the king should seize all the temporalities of the Church, and employ them as a perpetual fund for the service of the state. The inconsistency can only be accounted for on the grounds, that the decline of the king's popularity included the people's subserviency; or, that in the earlier parliaments of his reign, the favours granted to the mayor and citizens of London, and the repeal of obnoxious acts, had increased public gratitude at the price of its discretion. Be this as it may, the act soon bore fruit. It was passed in January, and in the March following William Sautre was made its first victim.

He was parish priest of a small church, then standing in Pancras Lane, Queen Street, Cheapside—its old burial-ground yet remains, though the church itself, destroyed in the great fire, was not again erected—and dedicated to St. Sith the Virgin. It was a rectory in the gift of the Prior and Convent of St. Mary's Overy, Southwark. Sautre was thus under, and perhaps purposely, the immediate observation of a powerful body of ecclesiastics, as previous to this he had been priest of St. Margaret's, at Lynn, in Norfolk, where, suspected of heretical opinions, he had been made to recant in the presence of the bishop of his diocese. This took place in

1399; and its reward was the small living already mentioned. The emoluments derived therefrom must have been trifling, for it was surrounded by a multitude of other churches, and as in all such cases, the profits from the glebe and tithes were in the hands of the patrons; but its vicinity to the dwellings of the rich spice and herb-sellers of Bucklersbury and the goldsmiths of Cheapside must have made the question of his doctrines one of importance in the view of those who bore in mind his recantation.

He seems, however, to have brought destruction on himself. Conscience-stricken, or aware of the infamy of preaching one class of doctrines, whilst another was secretly his, he petitioned parliament to be heard before it. But the clergy took the matter at once into their own hands. He was summoned before a council held in the Chapter House of St. Paul's; and here, in the presence of Anselm and six other bishops, he affirmed the eight opinions in which he had been previously examined, though denying that they were identified with those of his recantation. At least he sought to show a difference; but the council decided against him, and he was adjudged to be a relapsed heretic, and as such, sentenced to degradation; after that, to die, according to the new law. The chief question on which he was pressed, and one which in this case, as in so many others, was made the test of heresy, was, whether the Sacrament of the Altar, after the pronouncing of the sacramental words, remained material bread or not. He sought to evade it by declaring a firm belief that it was that bread of life that came down from heaven; this was not sufficient. He was required to acknowledge that it ceased to be bread, which, as a believer in Wycliffe's doctrines, he could not do.

After a lapse of four days, his degradation took place in St. Paul's Cathedral, in the presence of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, many bishops, and a vast multitude of spectators, as it had been resolved, in order to strike terror in all who held Wycliffe's doctrines, to perform this prelude to the stake with the precision usual to the Inquisitors of Languedoc.

What a new and extraordinary scene it must have been in that grand old cathedral of St. Paul's! The priests in their gorgeous vestments; the high as well as lateral altars, laden with their countless riches; the tombs, the lofty pillars, the arch upon arch receding into the dim distance of crypt, and cloister, and chapel; the light of the February morning streaming down upon all through the magnificent window of the nave.

And this—the longest interlude to the saddest tragedy—must have taken time. There was to deprive this poor denier of a quibble of his books, his vestments, the church keys; there was to shave his head and put on it the cap of a lay person; and, lastly, there was to deliver him into the hands of the secular power,*

* Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. p. 252.

which seemed as forward for its work of persecution as the ecclesiastical had been ; the king's decree being dated at Westminster the same day, Saturday, February 26, 1401.

Twelve days elapsed between this act of pompous vengeance and its consummation. They were probably passed by Sautre in the south tower of the western front of the magnificent old cathedral, as this, according to Stow,* was called the "Lowlardes Tower," and was long used as the bishop's prison for such as were committed for opinions in religion contrary to the faith of the Church. From this prison he was brought forth to die on the 10th of March, 1401. It fell, probably, upon the Friday, as on that day, unless it were a high festival of the Church, the weekly fair, as we have seen, was held ; and it seems to have been a custom, too remote for records to reach, to allot public punishments to those days on which a fair or market was secured by charter to the borough or township. Up the street of the Old Bailey, and through Newgate, the Earl Marshal and his constables probably brought this first victim of the new law, to the great western gate of St. Bartholomew's Priory, as "this was the spot generally used for the Smithfield burnings," the face of the sufferer being turned to the east and to the great western gate of St. Bartholomew, the prior of which was usually present on such occasions. "In March, 1849, during excavations necessary for a new sewer, and at a depth of three feet below the surface, immediately opposite to the entrance to the present church, the workmen laid open a mass of unhewn stone, blackened as if by fire, and covered with ashes, and human bones, charred, and partially consumed ; many of which were carried away as relics." †

We are told that enormous crowds were gathered together to witness this cruel, and, happily hitherto for Englishmen, novel spectacle. We may be likewise quite assured that the Church did not lose the occasion for a pompous display of its prerogative ; or that the *auto da fê* discredited its vainglorious preliminaries. We have no direct relation of the ceremonies, but others than philosophers do well to use the inductive process ; and thus referring to an old chronicle, which narrates the burning of John Bradly in 1409, we find, that when bound to the stake, the Sacramental bread, for a quibble on which he was about to die, was probably offered to him by the hands of the prior and by the light of twelve torches, to eat, to believe that it was veritable flesh and blood, and thus prostrate his reason before a sacerdotal power that had already pronounced itself infallible. Sautre, however, made no further recantation ; otherwise there would have been triumphant pens enough to record this victory of the Church over doctrines it both feared and hated ; and the multitudes assembled not only witnessed the first of those astounding spectacles that for a hundred and fifty years turned Smithfield into a charnel-house, but also of what bigotry is capable of, when backed by irresponsible power.

* Survey, Thom's Edit. p. 138.

† Cunningham's Hand-Book of London, p. 452.

For a time, in the quaint words of Fuller, "the ship of Christ had to lay poor and private," as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, was most furious and cruel in detecting and suppressing all suspected of piety.* But though he published a constitution forbidding the reading of any book of Scripture translated into English, either by John Wycliffe, or by others after his death,† the new doctrines only gathered strength and currency by this first of the Smithfield martyrdoms.

From time to time, as the century went by, other fires were lit, not only in Smithfield, but in the vicinity of the Tower as well as at St. Giles' in the Fields. The Smithfield martyrs of 1422 and 1431 were both priests, thus confirming in some degree our idea, that there was a general advance of opinions amongst the poorer priesthood, which enabled many of them to be the first to appreciate, and consequently promulgate, the doctrines of the great reformer. In 1494 occurred the martyrdom of Joan Broughton, an aged lady, who, as a disciple of Wycliffe, was held in such sanctity, that during the night following her burning, "her ashes were had away by such as had a love unto the doctrines that she died for."‡

But amongst those who fed the fires of Smithfield between the reigns of Henry the Fourth and that of Queen Elizabeth, when former statutes relating to heresy were repealed, and its jurisdiction was left as it had formerly stood at common law, no case is more remarkable than that of Anne Askew. She was a Lincolnshire lady, and greatly in favour with Katherine Parr, the last of the wives of Henry the Eighth. Failing to involve his queen in a charge of heresy on the fatal point of the corporal presence, Henry, or those who easily worked on his diseased temper during the few last months of his life, selected this lady as a victim, in the hope, as it appears, that she would prove an informer against Katherine. Her real name was Kyme; for she was the wife of a gentleman of that name; who, being himself a bigoted Papist, had turned her out of doors on account of her perusal of the Scriptures, and of her becoming a Protestant thereby. Her intimacy with Katherine Parr seems to have brought her under the especial surveillance of the king, for persons were set to watch and entrap her through her own words. She was first examined at Sadler's Hall, in Cheapside, in 1545; but with extraordinary wit she evaded the cruel art of Henry's inquisitors. She was next taken before the Lord Mayor, one Sir Martin Bowes, who, proceeding to examine her in these profound points of scholastic theology, displayed more zeal than wisdom; it was probably the first and last time that the civic chair burlesqued the pulpit. Questioning her as to the sacramental bread, this memorable knight-errant in the cause of transubstantiation, added, "And what if a mouse eat it after consecration? What shall become of the mouse, what sayest thou, thou foolish woman?" "What shall become of her, say you, my lord?" was Anne's answer. "I

* Church Hist. vol. ii. p. 396.

† Wilkin's Concilia, iii. p. 317.

‡ Foxe, Acts and Mon. vol. iv. p. 7.

say," said this wise justice, "that *that mouse is damned.*" "Alack, poor mouse!" was Anne's only answer. "By this time my lords had heard enough of my Lord Mayor's divinity; and, perceiving that some could not keep in their laughter, proceeded to the butchery and slaughter that they intended before they came hither."*

After several tedious examinations she courageously avowed her belief as to the question of the eucharist; and many of her remarks at this point of her fate, evince a curious knowledge both of the writings and opinions of Wycliffe and later reformers. Her fate thus sealed, she was sent to the Tower by Henry's infamous Attorney-General, Richard Rich, who, six years previously, namely, in 1540, had obtained the grant, in consideration of the sum of 1,064*l.* 1*l.* 3*d.*, "of the capital messuage and mansion-house of the dissolved monastery and priory of St. Bartholomew, in West Smithfield, within the suburbs of London."† Incredible as it may appear to ourselves, this man, assisted by Wriothesley, the Chancellor, put her to the rack with their own hands because she refused to accuse others, or to confess who it was who had supported her whilst in prison. Sir Anthony Knevet, Lieutenant of the Tower, interfering in her behalf, incurred the bitterest enmity of these men; who, nevertheless, did not cease their torture "till her bones and joints were almost plucked asunder." Her illness consequent upon this treatment hastened her fate. Accordingly, on July 16th, 1545, "she was brought into Smithfield in a chair, because she could not go on her feet by reason of her great torment;" and here she was tied to the stake by a chain set round her body. Three others were to suffer with her, namely, a priest, a tailor, and a gentleman of the court. The execution was purposely delayed till darkness set in, in order that it might appear more dreadful to the enormous multitude of people gathered together to witness it. These were kept off from the place the martyrs occupied by stout rails, whilst upon a scaffold, erected in front of St. Bartholomew's Church, the Chancellor Wriothesley, the Duke of Norfolk, and others of the king's council, sat with the Lord Mayor as spectators. After the usual sermon, Wriothesley sent her letters containing the king's pardon if she would recant, but she refused even to look at them, saying she had not come thither "to deny her Lord and Master." This courage and constancy were copied by her companions. Then the sapient Lord Mayor crying out *fiat justitia*, the reeds were set on fire, performed their office, and amidst "some rain and thunder," night settled down upon this awful and most ghastly scene.

Of all the atrocities committed in the name of religion and justice, which, during the reign of Henry VIII., hardened and brutalized the people to an inconceivable degree, none perhaps exceeded this last martyrdom of his reign. For constancy and faith are abstract qualities, that rather benefit the future than the immediate present;

* Styrpe, Eccles. Mem. vol. i. pt. 1, p. 559.

† Londini Illustrata, vol. ii.

and it may be said that it was not so much her own generation she influenced as those following, in which her faith and constancy had become traditions. As is usual with the victims of persecution, Anne Askew was in advance of her time. "She was," says Burnet, "nobly descended, and educated beyond what was ordinary in that age to her sex." Bale preserved some verses written whilst she was in Newgate ; but they are more curious than excellent. She was only twenty-two years of age when she suffered ; her countenance was remarkable for its serenity and sweetness ; and Bale, writing of her, uses this touching expression, that she was "a gentylwoman verye yonge, daynty, and tender."

Upon the martyrdoms of the Marian persecution we cannot enter ; though they lighted almost countless fires in Smithfield, and immolated on that spot John Rogers, the proto-martyr, and "Master" Bradford, a preacher. It was a persecution that cost London dear. The insecurity of property became such, and so many substantial citizens were arrested or had to fly the country, that the loss of property was estimated at 300,000*l.* to say nothing of the degradation of the popular mind, in consequence of the incessant exercise of brutal and unjust laws. After the death of Mary, the fires of Smithfield were but twice again lighted in the name of religion and the state. Once in the reign of Elizabeth, when two Anabaptists were burnt ; and once in the reign of James I. when an Arian suffered at the citation of King, Bishop of London. This was the last use made of the writ *de heretico comburendo*, in connexion with Smithfield : and by virtue of a statute passed in the 29 Car. II. c. 9, this law was totally abolished, and heresy again subjected only to ecclesiastical censure.

The question remains as to what was the abstract result of these sufferings for conscience sake. On the whole, we think their final residue was priceless in the extreme, both as regarded the people and the questions at issue. It is on this ground that resistance to tyranny and injustice is a virtue—that we have an entire sympathy with those who "glorified the Lord in the fires." And this, not based on a temporary principle, suited to a dogma or an age, but on the broad one that truth is of eternity, and being of God and from God, should be attested, at whatever cost, when the austere necessity arrives. Yes ! they were glorious who endured martyrdom for the cause of civil and religious liberty ; they shall be equally glorious who may endure social persecution for the advance of *one* enlightened idea connected with our human progress. For persecution, be it recollected, is not effete. The rack and the stake are of the past, but there are methods of persecution still existing, which imply as acute an amount of suffering, if viewed in relation with our finer nervous development, and the condition of human opinion. This we must take at its worth if we mean to be in advance of our age, and to promote its greatest questions. And thus regarding persecution as a contingent of progressive truth, we shall be as firm in advocacy as in endurance for its sake.

After the Reformation, Smithfield and the Priory of St. Bartholomew passed gradually into their present condition. The precincts of the latter was a great place of Puritan resort during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. The Nonconformists had a chapel where they secretly preached, and Sir Walter Mildmay, one of their most enlightened adherents, lies buried in the old church. At the font of that church William Hogarth, the great painter, was baptized; and the old Tower of Canonbury, after many changes in its fortunes, sheltered Goldsmith whilst he wrote his exquisite fiction of the Vicar of Wakefield.

CHAPTER II.

THE TOWER: AND ITS ILLUSTRIOUS IMPRISONED. FISHER, MORE, AND THOMAS CROMWELL.

IF, amongst so many places consecrated by their national characteristics of fearlessness and constancy, Englishmen have one more noted than the rest, it is the Tower of London. Both in relation to the kingdom and its chief city, it is the key-stone—the central spot—the “sacred mount,” whereon, in disaster or the decay of empire, the last free men of so great a nation might take their stand, either to secure victory or to hail death, in defence of those liberties without which their name would be a nullity, and their nationality but a shadow of the past: for here More and Fisher, Vane and Eliot, gave up, for right of conscience and for many forms of truth, their noble breath.

Beyond all doubt the antiquity of the Tower is very great. Imperishable foundations and other signs of Roman workmanship attest the hand of the master-masons of the world; this not less so, because Gundulph in the age of the Conqueror made their use the same, as did Sir Christopher Wren in the sixteenth century, for the genuine architect knows well that his architecture depends upon the foundation. The monk Fitzstephen, whose tract “*Descriptio nobilissimæ civitatis Londoniæ*” we have already referred to, tells us “that here on this spot in ancient times stood a tower of defence,” and he adds, “that the mortar with which it was built had been tempered with the blood of beasts.” But we need not this assurance of a remote antiquity. As to the colour of the mortar, it was not peculiar to the Tower alone, and could the monk have divested himself of the ignorance and credulity of his age, he would have seen it in other Roman remains extant in his day. In a portion of the City wall at Tower Hill, brought to light in 1852, Mr. Roach Smith found that “pounded tile had been used in the mortar which cemented the facing. This gave it that peculiar red hue which led Fitzstephen to imagine the cement of the foundations of the Tower to have been tempered with the blood of beasts.”* The Romans used several kinds of mortar, and the concrete with which they cemented the core of their walls was applied in a liquid and boiling state. Hence its extraordinary hardness and vitrified appearance. This fact was first discovered at the close of the last century by Mr. Ives, a Norfolk gentleman, who had both wealth and leisure to make

* Illustrations of Roman London, p. 16.

experiments at Garianonum, on the "Saxon Shore." The same thing was again noticed on forming the Blackwall Railway, at a part where a Roman wall was uncovered; whilst the caldrons in which the liquid was prepared have been dug up at Pevensey (Anderida), and other places on the coast of Kent.

As the key-stone of the Roman defences, the Tower must have been a point of great strategical value, particularly in those latter years of Roman dominion when the Thames gave such ready access to hordes of Saxon pirates bent only on plunder and conquest. Of its condition during the Saxon era we have no account. In the reign of the Conqueror we have it definitely mentioned; for he employed Gundulph, Bishop of Rochester, to build "the great, white, and square tower." From this period repairs and additions were constantly made, and its Norman constables, often at war with the Church, and always with the people, were not slow to tell the latter, in the candour of barbarian arrogance, that if they contended for the liberties of their city, they should be imprisoned; and for this reason, and that they might lay in "divers prisons," should they offend, "many lodgings were made, that no one might speak to another." Undaunted by these threats, the citizens unflinchingly contended for their rights, carried their complaints to the king, and compelled Edward IV. to make proclamation that a gallows and scaffold erected by the constables on Tower-hill, "was not done in derogation of the city's liberties."

Passing from this singular point of popular progress, when in their early struggle for civil rights the people coalesced with the monarchy against the power of the barons, we find tyranny under a new development—that of the monarchy against the people. Henceforth, therefore, despotism assumed new features; and when at last, incorporating with itself the function of ecclesiastical supremacy, it made the civil and religious jurisdiction one, the Tower of London became a state prison, whose annals have scarcely a parallel, certainly none of profounder interest.

The Tower itself remains so unchanged in many of its essential features—as the White Tower, the Chapel ad Vincula, a portion of the towers, the Lieutenant's house, the ballium walls, and the outer ditch, as to be recognised at once, when compared with the survey* made in 1597, and the record of a court-leet held in 1535, the year of the execution of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More. Otherwise its neighbourhood is so extraordinarily altered, that only three of its ancient features may be said to remain; the thoroughfares of Thames street and Tower street, the very old church of All Hallows Barking, and a portion of the open space of Tower Hill. A reference to Aggas's plan and the modern map of London will show this in an instant. By the eastern side of the Tower, at the postern, then known as the "Iron Gate," were only a few scattered houses, and the Hospital of St. Catherine, a charitable foundation governed by four secular priests, and four sisters without

* *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. i.

vows, whose duty it was to go abroad in the city to perform acts of charity. This building, which contained some good architecture and remarkable tombs, was saved at the Reformation through the intercession of Anne Boleyn, and during the whole period of the Commonwealth was served by one of the most efficient of the Puritan ministers.* Thus preserved, and its neighbourhood greatly increased in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by the settlement of a body of Flemings, it remained till 1825, when it was pulled down, and the present magnificent Docks of St. Catherine erected on the site. A thread-like strip yet remains of the plot of ground assigned for the burial of these Flemings. It is inclosed within the iron railings now surrounding the gardens formed above the ditch, and, occasionally used for the burial of the soldiers of the garrison and the poorer people of the district of the Tower, is one of the most dusty, mournful, desolated spots of human sepulchre it is possible to see. Tenderness and humanity should have been spared such a degradation of even corrupt and perishable human dust. Beyond this ancient hospital, to the east, stretched the manor of Shadwell and the highway of Radcliffe, "with fair elm-trees on both sides!"† To the north of the same was East Smithfield, a plot of ground covered by gardens and houses. At the extremity of this was another religious foundation called the Abbey of Grace. This had been founded on occasion of the great pestilence in 1348, there being no churchyards within the precincts of the city disencumbered enough to hold the dead. It was suppressed in 1539, and large storehouses and ovens for baking ship-bread erected on its site. Without the city postern of the Tower was another religious foundation—that of an Abbey of Nuns called the Minories, and adjacent to this, as may be seen by Aggas's plan, was a large open space reaching from the Tower-ditch to the Abbey, in which stood a cross, surrounded by what seem the gravestones of a burial ground. Possibly of those who, from some religious cause, had been denied a grave in consecrated soil. To the south of this, and lying between it and the Abbey of Grace, were fields, to this day retaining the name of Goodman's Fields, though densely covered by houses, and of the origin of which name we have an exquisite description in Stow. Then came the city ditch and postern. The wall of London went, anciently, close up to the Tower; but in the beginning of the reign of Richard I., his famous Chancellor, Bishop Longchamp, pulled down three hundred feet of it in order to enlarge the Tower, and to encompass it with a ditch or moat. Within the postern, and southward to the Thames, ran a roadway called Petty Wales, supposed to have been named so from a great stone building appointed for the lodging of the Princes of Wales. On this opened the two remarkable thoroughfares of Thames street and Tower street, both, without doubt, originally Roman ways—the one densely inhabited by a maritime, half-foreign population, the other beautified by rural lanes, in which stood many fine houses and gardens tenanted by the nobility,

* Nichols, Royal Hospital of St. Katherine.

† Stow, Survey.

and with the extraordinary old church of All Hallows Barking, its graveyard then extending an open space to Tower Hill.

Though Longchamp, Richard's chancellor, had failed, like the Dane's courtiers, to make the tide obedient to his will, enough of the Thames must have flowed into the deep and wide ditch, with which he encompassed the Tower, to have made it formidable as a defence, both on the land side, and towards the river. Deepened and widened in successive reigns, it washed the outer ballium walls all round, and passing the well-known "Traitor's Gate," left a narrow wharf between itself and the Thames, which is supposed to have been originally defended by a low embattled wall, though none is marked in the Survey. This wharf was connected with the Tower by two small draw-bridges. The principal entrance was then, as now, at the south-west angle of the inclosure; the only difference being, that there were considerable outworks enclosed within a small moat connecting itself with that which surrounded the outer ballium. These, long since destroyed, formed the barbican, the post of an advanced guard, and where a porter was stationed to keep watch and ward, to announce in form all state arrivals at the gates of the fortress, to detain strangers till their business was made known to the governor, and till orders were received for their admission.* These usual ceremonies were not omitted till the reign of James I. This gate of the bastion, originally called the bulwark, was afterwards named the "Lyon's Gate," by reason of the Royal Menagerie kept in the surrounding courtway, and must have stood somewhere about the spot where now the first sentries pace to and fro beside the wooden inclosure that separates the precincts of the fortress from Tower Hill. From this point we tread hallowed ground. We pass beneath the Middle Tower, cross the ancient bridge over the moat, now dry and grassy, then again beneath the By-ward Tower, and we are within those very walls consecrated by so much that cannot die, either as regards our austere protest against irresponsible tyranny, our redeeming tears for suffering and truth's sake, and our admiring love for that august, that divine spirit of liberty which, taking growth in prisons and in dungeons such as these, the laws of human progression shall finally and triumphantly make ours.

The outer ward, or ballium of the Tower, may be still traversed from point to point. It goes by the name of Mint Street, or the "Ballum," and confined within lofty walls, with some of the old towers yet frowning down upon it, it has, here and there, where repairs and rebuilding can be lost sight of, an air of extraordinary antiquity. The Bowyer Tower, where Clarence is said to have been drowned in a butt of Malmsey, is finely restored and incorporated in the new barracks built on the site of the Great Store-house, burnt down in 1841. With this exception, that of a new

* Bayley's Tower, vol. i. pp. 105-6.

canteen, some repairs to the outer walls, and some old-looking houses built up into either wall, much remains in the same condition as it was in the sixteenth century.

Passing from the By-ward Tower, already mentioned, another is immediately at hand—small, and very old; and stretching from it, in the lofty inner ballium wall, with a pleasant look-out upon the Thames, are many variously-sized windows of a dwelling-house within the inner ward. Both are remarkable places. The one is the Bell Tower, celebrated as the prison of Bishop Fisher, the other is the “Lieutenant’s



BELL TOWER.

Lodgings,” where Lucy Hutchinson, daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, then Lieutenant of the Tower, was born in 1619—20. Sir Allen died in 1630, after a lingering illness of three years, induced by a fever, caught whilst accompanying the favourite Buckingham on his disgraceful expedition to the Isle of Rhée. In 1638, this lady was married at St. Andrew’s Church, in Holborn, to the eldest son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, of Owthorpe, in Nottinghamshire, and was henceforth known as Lucy Hutchinson, the most eminent of the Puritan women. Liberal, enlightened, learned, no sufferings

could deaden her enthusiasm in the cause of truth and liberty. She stood nobly by her husband's side during the siege of Nottingham by the royalists, and when he died, the victim of a dungeon and the second Charles, she soothed her grief, and sustained her fortitude, by writing for posterity the life of that husband who, in his hatred of intolerance and usurpation, had incurred alike the ill-will of Cromwell and the Presbyterians.

Passing in beneath the gateway of the Bloody Tower, which has always been, till within a few past years, the only entrance into the inner ward, or ballium, we have before us to the right, after passing a broad and modern flight of steps, the White Tower, or keep, the great antiquarian feature of the Tower of London. This, as we have seen, was the Conqueror's work, and its enormous walls seem as indestructible as though built yesterday. It is square in form, with a turret at each corner, and though search has been often made, neither well nor chimney has been found within it. It contains, besides a range of vaults, three floors. The former occupied by the ordnance, are so extraordinarily gloomy, as to make the uplifted hand scarce discernible at noon-day. Yet here, in their dark, and, without exaggeration, terrible recesses, are shown the traditional prisons of Bishop Fisher, and Sir Thomas More. Fisher's prison was changed on several occasions, though, without doubt, the chamber of the Bell Tower was the one wherein he suffered the cold and hunger referred to in his letter to Thomas Cromwell. As to More's chief place of imprisonment we are inclined to think it was in the Beauchamp Tower, yet it may have been for a short space here. It is a damp filthy cell, ten feet long by eight wide, though possibly lighted by loopholes, or a grating, before the new armoury was raised up against the outer portion of its eastern wall; nor is there any reason to doubt but that these vaults bear other relation to the dark annals of the Tower. They formed a locality fitted for the rack, for neither the cries of the victims, nor the questions of the inquisitors, could meet living ear. The floor over these vaults is now occupied by rooms used by the ordnance, and by that vaulted chamber, to which the public are admitted, under the name of Queen Elizabeth's Armoury. This was Sir Walter Raleigh's prison for sixteen years. The dark, airless recess where he slept is still shown; and here it was he wrote his "History of the World," aided by the loan of books from the famous library of Sir Robert Cotton. The next floor contains the celebrated Norman Chapel, and two chambers, one of which was, till recently, filled with records, the other is still in use for the purposes of the ordnance. Nothing more beautiful than this chapel exists in the whole range of English mediæval architecture. Sixteen massive stone pillars, placed round it in a horse-shoe line, support a gallery level with the third floor; within this the chapel, in its original condition, is open to the roof, and is occasionally shown to visitors, and to special bodies of archaeologists. The remaining portion of the third floor is occupied by the Council Chamber, so celebrated in history,

and mentioned by Shakespeare. Its double line of rude wooden supports, its vast size and extraordinary wall-screen, carry the mind back to the age of the Conquest, or indeed, further, to the days of the Northmen, and the scenes of their rude feasts in honour of Valhalla and the gods.

To write a succinct history of those imprisoned in the Tower, would be to write a voluminous history of the country ; we must therefore pass by the fate of Wallace, the uprise of the unrecognised and suffering people under Cade and Wat Tyler, the stories of Clarence and the young princes, the history of Empson and Dudley, and that of Edward Bohun, Duke of Buckingham, for the sake of illustrious and particular instances, as may best elucidate the contests of intolerance and despotism with civil and religious freedom.

The seed which Wycliffe had sown by his noble doctrines had taken root and flourished through the century which preceded the Reformation. The Wars of the Roses and the prohibition of the Scriptures checked undoubtedly what would have been in more prolific growth ; but the fires which had immolated Sautre, Sir John Oldecastle, and Joan Broughton, had not been without manifest effect in exciting in the hearts of the people a hatred against a religious system supported by such means. Nor were the several governments, if taken in the majority of instances, merely passive instruments for augmenting the wealth and power of the clergy. Though they tolerated, nay, even encouraged persecution, they took care on every possible occasion to check the papal system of authority and extortion. As early as the reign of Richard II. the Statute of *Præmunire* had, as Fuller quaintly says, "cut off the Pope's fingers," and more than once, through the reigns of the Lancastrian kings, the clergy were alarmed by the popular opinions concerning the possessions of the Church. Such enemies were, in fact, far more formidable than those that dissented solely on the grounds of superstitions and corrupt doctrines ; for where one man had learning enough to discuss the questions of the eucharist or auricular confession, a hundred had common sense sufficient to understand the universal character of that rapacity which, in the very face of the Statute of *Præmunire*, left no method of acquisition uncared for. So amenable were the higher clergy to this statute, that when it was made the instrument of Wolsey's downfall, they compounded, and, paying the sum of 100,000*l.*, acknowledged the king's supremacy with the qualifying clause, "as far as may be with the law of Christ." Not, however, that the lower clergy—the parochial clergy especially—were benefited in any measure by this greed. If here and there they were corrupt, they were rather the instruments of the irresponsible corruption of the lordly abbots and priors who, revelling in riotous and pompous luxury, left thousands of their poorer brethren to contend with abject poverty, and to toil unrequited in the cause of the noblest learning. This unrequited class contained within it, there is little doubt, the greatest, if in many cases unavowed,

promoters of ultimate reformation ; for if only through a superior degree of learning, they advanced the operating causes necessarily fatal to superstition and infallible assumption. What that ultimate reformation was is well known : as regarded doctrine, no more than a shallow compromise between the superstitions attacked so long before by Wycliffe, and the opinions of Luther ; and, as respected revenue, the division of its larger portion between the king and his greedy favourites.

The Act of Supremacy, which drew Fisher and More completely into the toils of the tyrannous king, was passed in the parliament assembled after its prorogation, November 4th, 1534. Fisher had previously given offence to the king by his conscientious opposition to the divorce from Catherine of Arragon ; and when, upon Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, he refused to join the parliament in its obsequious oath of allegiance, he was attainted and committed to the Tower. He had been sent there in the April previous for misprision of treason in the affair of the Maid of Kent—a religious enthusiast more fitted for the hands of the physician than to have been punished at the instance of the state. He escaped by paying a fine of three hundred pounds. But this was not sufficient to satisfy Henry's long-harboured and implacable hate. Fisher's destruction resolved upon, a new experiment to effect it was tried. He and Sir Thomas More were summoned before the council at Lambeth in order to take the new oath of succession. But he, as well as More, conceiving that both a religious and a civil opinion were involved therein, would only so far subscribe as the civil power was concerned, as they still believed Henry's marriage with Catherine to be valid. Therefore, refusing to take this oath, though tendered to them a second time, they were both committed to the Tower.

The Bell Tower, so called from its once containing the alarum bell of the garrison, was not, at that time, incorporated with the "Lieutenant's Lodgings ;" but it stood near enough to bring the warmth of its fires and the savour of its plenteous meals in sufficiently close neighbourhood to make the fact of Fisher's destitution and hunger—if at this time he was confined here—still more deplorable and unchristian. He was committed, as we have seen, in May, and on the 22d of December of the same year he wrote thus to Cromwell. Hitherto he had carefully abstained from writing, lest any word should be tortured to his disadvantage ; but his extremity of distress at length necessitated the hazardous attempt. After explaining this, he continues :—"Furthermore, I beseeche you to be gode master unto me in my necessitie ; for I have neither shirt nor sute, nor yet other clothes that are necessary for me to weare but that be ragged and rent to shamefully. Notwithstanding, I might easily suffer that, if they would keep my body warm. But my diet also ; God knows how slender it is at many times. And now in mine age my stomake may not away but with few kinds of meats, which if I want I decay forthwith and fall into crases and diseases of my body, and cannot keep myself in health. And, as our Lord knoweth, I have

nothing left unto me to provide any better, but as my brother of his own purse laieth out to me to his great hindrance."* Some clothes were granted, but otherwise no abatement seems to have been made in the rigour of his imprisonment. Like More, he had been despoiled of all his worldly goods ; for, with his usual lust of possession, Henry had sent down commissioners into Kent to make seizure of all Fisher's property. They effected their purpose with the ordinary brutal zeal of myrmidons and harpies, turning out his servants, rifling his goods, taking part for the king, and the larger portion for themselves. The bishop's noble library, already bequeathed, in addition to his household goods, by deed of gift to St. John's College, Cambridge, and supposed to be the finest then belonging to any private man in Christendom, they desecrated with ruthless hands, filling thirty-two great vats or pipes with what they could, and embezzling, spoiling, and scattering the rest, with the wanton spirit of persecution and delegated power. Nor was this all. One of Fisher's predecessors in the see of Rochester had left 300*l.* for the use of the diocese. To this sum, of which the bishop for the time being had charge, Fisher had added 100*l.*, storing the whole in a bag, and putting this in a chest. On the inside of the chest was written in olden character, "Let no man offer to lay hands on this, for it is the Church's treasure ;" whilst to the mouth of the bag itself Fisher had attached a label with these words, "*Tu quoque fac simile.*" Yet to these harpies all was common spoil. One mirthful incident varied this prelude to the tragedy. In their search the commissioners found in Fisher's oratory a wooden coffer, strongly girded about with hoops of iron and doubly locked. Thinking, because it had been thus so privately kept, that it held some great treasure, Sir Richard Moryson and the other commissioners summoned witnesses to be present at the opening, so that they might testify to the amount discovered ; but when, after much ado, the poor bishop's box was broken open, they were amazed to find nothing richer than a hair shirt and three whips !

The sufferings from cold and hunger were not the only ones. A continual system of mental torture was kept up, both as regarded Fisher and More, by sending clerks of the council to examine them in the presence of Sir Edmund Walsingham, the Lieutenant of the Tower, as to their *private* opinion touching the question of supremacy and the Statute of Succession. Both answered with caution, both hoped to evade the question ; but Henry had been advised that a refusal to answer was proof of malice, and equivalent to a denial ; and a special commission was appointed to try the two prisoners on a charge of high treason. At this juncture Fisher was nominated a cardinal by the pope, an honour the old man was not in the least desirous of, for to those who brought him word of the new dignity, he said, "If the hat were lying at his feet he would not stoop to take it up, so little did he set by it." But Henry, who

* Cotton MSS. Cleop. E. v. 172.

presumed that his subjects possessed the same greed of worldly titles as himself, not only sent off a messenger to Calais, to stay "this favour of the pope's" coming further, but exclaimed to Cromwell, "Well, let the pope send him a hat when he will, Mother of God! he shall wear it on his shoulders then; for I'll leave him never a head to set it on."

The bishop was brought to trial June 17, 1535. Previous to this he had been so ill that Henry had sent his own physicians to him, lest death should step in between him and his victim. Too ill even yet to walk, he rode part of the way between the Tower and Westminster on horseback, in a black cloth cloak, guarded by a large number of halberts, bills, and other weapons, and with the axe of the Tower carried before him. But only part of the journey could be performed in this manner; Fisher's weakness becoming extreme, his guards took boat and so conveyed him to Westminster.

He was arraigned on the question of the supremacy alone, and not for "divers points," as occasionally stated. His offence was that of having, in the Tower of London, on the 7th of May, 1535, spoken the following words: "The Kyng oure Sovereign lord is not supreme hedd yn erthe of the cherche of Englande."* He seems to have been entrapped into this admission by Rich, afterwards Lord Chancellor, who was at the Tower about the day stated for the purpose of depriving More of his books. Inveigling Fisher into a conversation upon the subject of the supremacy, under pretence that he was sent privately by the king, and for his special information, the bishop, or rather Dr. Fisher, for he was a bishop no longer, was not proof against the artifice. But Rich was capable of this, and "the council who took advantage of his baseness, may without injustice be suspected of having prompted it."† The same fraud was, as we shall see, practised on Sir Thomas More.

Thus, for the mere denial of the king's supremacy as self-elected head of the Church, Fisher suffered death. It was a denial into which he was inveigled as we see; but the Act of Parliament itself on which the indictment was founded was of the worst possible character; whilst the construction, by which the mere expression of an opinion upon a disputed point in theology was held to amount to a malicious and treasonable attempt to deprive the king of his assumed title, was even more iniquitous than the Act itself.‡ In fact, this statute enacted the very offences it punished; and was thus, with its natural successor, the Act of Uniformity, the real hindrance of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

It was more. Infamous as it was in its first enactment, when it gave to human power the place and prerogative of Deity, it was still worse when the natural corollary of its incidents came into force, and it set down a uniformity of religious principles

* Cott. MSS. Cleopatra, E. vi. fol. 178 b.

† *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. p. 82.

‡ *Ubi supra*, p. 84.

as those only through which men could gain salvation. For it was but logical to premise that a supreme head could take upon itself the authority of enacting a supreme religion, whether opposed or not to the consciences of the majority ; and thus we have, within the conciseness of an aphorism, the foundation of all those religious and half those civil dissensions it is our province to elucidate.



FISHER DESCENDING THE BELL TOWER.

The sentence passed against Fisher was more terrible than the one enforced. After it was pronounced, he was conveyed back to the Tower, some portion of the way on horseback, and the rest on foot, surrounded by guards, and with the edge of the fatal axe now reversed. When he reached the entrance-gate of the Tower, he thanked his guards with as benign and cheerful a countenance, as though he had come from some "great feast or banquet."*

* Bailey's reprint of Hall's Life of Fisher, p. 218.

To the surprise of everybody—for it was a solecism in the unrelenting character of Henry, thus to pause between his wish to destroy, and its accomplishment—five days elapsed before the writ arrived for Fisher's execution. The delay was, doubtless, owing to the pleading of Cranmer, who advised the king to show mercy to one whom his father had so esteemed “for grate and singular virtue, and good and vertuous lyving.”* But the pleading was in vain.

The warrant was brought so late at night to the Tower, that, in Hall's quaint language, “the lieutenant was loth to diserve the prisoner of his rest.” But “in the morning, before five of the clock, he came to him in the chamber of the Bell Tower, finding him yet asleep in his bed, and waked him, showing him that he was come to him on a message from the king, whose pleasure was that he should suffer death that forenoon.” “Well,” quoth the bishop, “you bring me no great news, for I have for a long time looked for this message. I most humbly thank his Majesty that it pleaseth him to rid me from all this worldly business, and I thank you also for your tidings. Yet, let me by your patience sleep an hour or two, for I have slept very little this night. Not for any fear of death, I thank God, but by reason of my great infirmity and weakness.”† After delivering a further message from the king, that Fisher would use little speech on the scaffold, the lieutenant left the old man to his rest. After sleeping more than two hours soundly, he bid his man help him up, lay forth a clean white shirt, and to brush the best apparel he had. This servant, who was probably in the pay of Rich or the council, questioned him as to his meaning concerning the care and nicety of his apparel, “when he must put all off again within two hours?” “What of that?” was the answer. “Is not this our marriage day, and that it behoveth us therefore to use more cleanliness for solemnity of the marriage-state?” When the hour of execution came he even wrapped his neck in his fur tippet, and taking up his New Testament, went out of his prison-door with the lieutenant. But being weak and scarcely able to go down the turret-stairs, he was, when at the bottom, taken up in a chair between two of the lieutenant's men and carried to the Tower-gate amidst a concourse of guards. Proceeding thence to the “uttermost precincts of the Liberties of the Tower,”‡ he was delivered into the hands of Henry Monmouth and John Cootes, the sheriffs,§ who, with a greater number of men and weapons, carried him to the scaffold on Tower Hill, “himself praying all the way.” “When he was come to the foot of the scaffold, they that carried him offered to help him up the stairs. ‘But then,’ said he, ‘My masters, seeing I am come so far, let me alone, and ye shall see me shift for myself well enough,’ and so went up the stairs without any help, so lively that it was marvellous to them that knew before of his debility and weakness; but, as he was mounting up the stairs, the

* Appendix to Funeral Sermon of Countess of Richmond.

† Ibid. p. 226.

‡ Bailey, p. 222.

§ Lists of Shrievalty.

south-east wind shined very bright in his face ; whereupon he said to himself these words, lifting up his hands, ‘*Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini ; et facies vestre non confundentur.*’ ”* Being on the scaffold, and the executioner ready, his gown and tippet were taken from him, “and he stood in his doublet and hose in the sight of all the people, whereof was no small number assembled to see this execution : then was to be seen a long, lean, and slender body, having on it little other substance beside skin and bones ; . . . and, therefore, it was thought something cruel to put such a man to death, being so near his end.” After speaking briefly in favour of the king and Church, he knelt and prayed. Then his eyes were bound with a handkerchief, and “he laid his head down in the middle of a little block, when the executioner, being ready with a sharp and heavy axe, cut asunder his neck at one blow ; which bled so abundantly, that many wondered to see so much blood issue out of so slender and lean a body.”†

The treatment of his corpse was a scandal even to that barbarous age ; nor does there seem to be much reason to doubt the Roman Catholic version of those barbarities ; for we have only to recollect that but a few months after this date the headless body of Anne Boleyn was thrust into an old arrow-chest without pity or tender care. It was, therefore, not likely that more decency or charity was awarded to the corpse of a man dying so notoriously in disfavour of the king‡ as Fisher, or that many would even have the moral courage to thwart the will of the king, who, according to Cardinal Pole, had himself given directions that the corpse should be exposed to the gaze of the rabble. Indeed, so great was the popular dread of Henry, that, according to some authorities, no one dared to approach the body except those who came for the sake of treating it with indignity. “After stripping the body,” says Hall, “the executioner departed, and thus left the headless trunk naked upon the scaffold, where it remained that sort for the most part of the day, save that one, for pity and humanity sake, cast a little straw over it.” Whoever this might be, it was the only angel present at this awful scene. At eight o’clock in the evening the king permitted his victim to have burial, “whereupon two of the watchers took the corpse upon a halberd between them, and so carried it to a churchyard there hard by, called All Hallows Barkin, where, on the north side of the churchyard, hard by the wall, they digged a grave with their halberds, and therein, without any reverence, tumbled the body of this holy prelate, all naked, and flat upon his belly, without either shirt or other accustomed thing belonging to a Christian man’s burial, and so covered it quickly with earth.” § It has been stated by several authorities that Fisher’s body was removed a few days afterwards to the Chapel ad Vincula, and there interred in the grave of Sir Thomas More. This, however, is very doubtful. Hall mentions no such removal ; and the

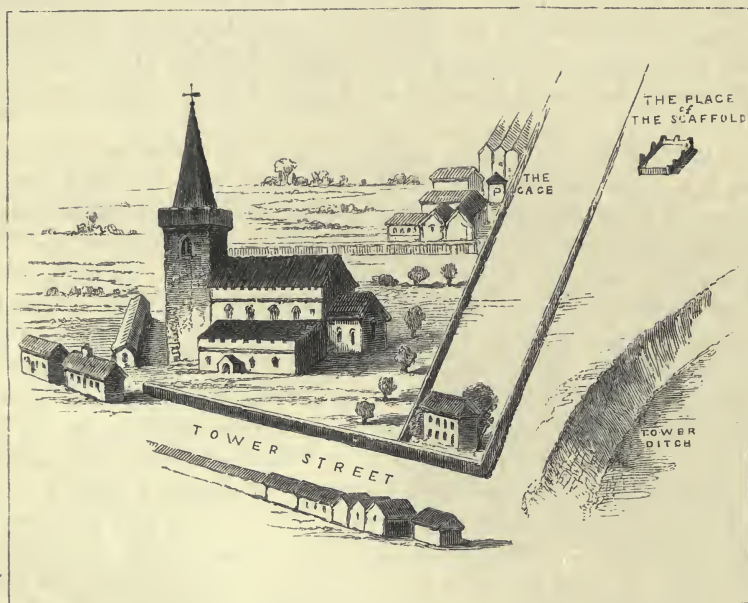
* Bailey, p. 226.

† Ibid. p. 229.

‡ Dodd’s Church Hist. vol. i. p. 161.

§ Bailey, p. 231.

Catholics were likely to be well informed on all points relating to Fisher's execution. His head was set up on London Bridge next day amidst those of the Carthusians, who had been the first to suffer for refusing to sign the Act of Supremacy ; but the sight caused such enormous crowds to collect, that at the end of fourteen days it was thrown into the Thames, and replaced by that of Sir Thomas More. Dodd mentions a miracle as the cause of removal ; but the true miracle was the love and regard of the people ; for, vacillating as they did between the old and new faith, just in proportion



ALL HALLOWS CHURCH.

as credulity or common sense prevailed, it was natural that pity became paramount when Fisher's fate was sealed, and thus temporarily hid the worthlessness of the cause for which he died. There was another point that was likely to vindicate him with those who had risen up to crush the rapacity of his rapacious order. Fisher was without greed. He had not only refused two richer bishoprics than that of Rochester, but derived the fortune with which he bought his noble library, from hereditary possessions bequeathed to him by his father, who had been a wealthy merchant of Beverley, in Yorkshire.

It may interest the reader to learn the present condition of Fisher's chamber in the Bell Tower. It is approached by a little winding rugged staircase, leading from a passage in the upper part of the governor's house, and has of late years been used for the purposes of a laundry. This is somewhat an ignoble use ; but happily nothing can wholly desecrate that which has once enshrined suffering, constancy, and fortitude. Several windows looking towards the south have been inserted in the deep recesses of the walls : those bed recesses, that in almost all the towers bespeak as well as any record the purposes for which they were built. This room, it is said, was afterwards the prison of Queen Elizabeth when princess ; and the narrow terrace between the ballium wall, and the roof of the governor's house, with a low door opening from the chamber, is still called hers. In all probability its use was denied to the aged bishop.

But a fortnight elapsed between the execution of Fisher and that of Sir Thomas More. Their crime, and the date of their trial, had been nearly the same, though More escaped through his private intimacy and friendship with the Constable and Lieutenant of the Tower, those severe rigours of imprisonment which the aged bishop had suffered. His place of confinement seems to have been in reality the Beauchamp Tower ; the one lying north from that so long occupied by Fisher. Like the Bell Tower, it stood west towards the city, and between the two ran a paved footway along the top of the ballium walls. Next to the Keep, or White Tower, it was the most important prison of the fortress, and as such was continually used for the more illustrious of those committed to the custody of the Lieutenant of the Tower. This celebrated prison, the Beauchamp Tower, has of late years undergone a most skilful restoration to its ancient state. In the course of this, new inscriptions were discovered, and, what is more important, a secret gallery or recess, from which there is little reason to doubt a complete system of eaves-dropping was carried on. There was access to it from the ballium wall, and its discovery throws no little light upon the nature of much of the hitherto inexplicable evidence educed both against More as well as Anne Boleyn. What an age of moral barbarism it was, when atrocious methods of this kind were resorted to, to entrap the guiltless !

Sir Thomas More is seen best from the points of his literary and domestic character. As a religionist he was neither tolerant nor enlightened. "But," says Mackintosh, "he was the first Englishman who signalized himself as an orator, the first writer of a prose which is still intelligible, and probably the first layman since the beginning of authentic history who was Chancellor of England." He lived at a time when the law, as it were, had grown into a science, for Littleton, Brooke, Fortescue, and Fitzherbert had already written and compiled their remarkable books and treatises, and he was well prepared by his previous studies to enter into those exact and subtle distinctions which belong so preeminently to the earlier stages of jurisprudence. For

at this date, whilst the several divisions of letters were far from being clearly understood, religion, morals, and law were taught together, and this necessarily to disadvantage; and thus, whilst he held a lectureship at Furnival's Inn, he also delivered lectures at St. Lawrence's Church in the Old Jewry, on St. Augustine's well-known work touching the Divine government of the moral world. This confounding of practical with abstract ethics may have been one cause of More's toleration in words, and intolerance in act; for though liberal and enlightened when the pen was in his hand, it was otherwise when the religionist of another creed was before him. He was thus as an author a philosopher, as a judge a bigot. Previous to his being made Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1520, he occupied a house in Bucklersbury, then a pleasant part of the town, with good houses, and a fair view of the Thames at the point where the Walbrook flowed into it. Soon after this date he purchased a house at Chelsea by the river-side, where he settled with his family. This stood on the site, or rather at the north end, of what is now Beaufort Row,* and was environed by a "faire garden."† Hither he retired, when weary of London, to that domestic life so beautifully described both by his son-in-law, Roper, and by Erasmus. "Here he converseth with his wife, his son, his daughters-in-law, his three daughters, and their husbands, with eleven grandchildren. There is not a man living so affectionate to his children as he; he loveth his old wife as well as if she were a young maid."‡

In May, 1532, Sir Thomas More resigned the great seal, being unable to conscientiously agree with the king on the subject of the divorce. He "had carried that dignity," says Burnet, "with great temper, and lost it with much joy. He saw now how far the king's designs went, and though he was for cutting off the illegal jurisdiction which the popes exercised in England, and therefore went cheerfully along with the suit of *præmunire*; yet when he saw a total rupture like to follow he excused himself, and retired from business with a greatness of mind that the ancient philosophers pretended in such cases."§ More, as we have seen, was implicated with Fisher in both matters relating to the succession and the Maid of Kent, but his trial was later by some days. Before this took place, the Lords Commissioners went twice to the Tower to tender the oath to him, but he would not advance further than his original declaration of a perfect willingness to maintain the settlement of the crown so far as it was a matter purely political and within the undisputed competence of parliament to adjudge. On other points relating to his own conscience he would not speak. More, as it would seem, considered himself safe, "whilst he yet said nothing which would be tortured into a resemblance of those acts derogatory from the king's marriage which had been made treason;" but Rich was at hand to assist in the infamous office of betrayal, as in the previous case of Fisher. On the trial he was

* Falkner's Chelsea, p. 270.

† Erasm. Epist. Lib. x. Epist. 30.

‡ Ayscough's Catalogue.

§ Hist. of Reformation, vol. i. p. 252.

examined as a witness ; an odious act, as he was a law officer of the crown ; but his testimony was so utterly at variance with what was known of More's opinions as to greatly shake his credit with the court. More's dignified reply would have abashed any man less infamous than the torturer of Anne Askew ; but by this time Rich was too well practised to blush at perjury, however doubly dyed. Nevertheless this incredible testimony was received, probably for no worthier reason than it sided with the well-known desire of the king, and More was condemned to die. Then it was when sentence of death was passed that he renounced his opinions touching the supremacy, "that in all the doctors' writing she had seen nothing that avouched *that a layman was or could be head of the Church.*" *

He was conducted back to the Tower, as he had been brought, through the principal streets on foot, and clad in a coarse woollen gown, in order to make a greater impression on the people, or perhaps add to his shame and sufferings. The colour of his hair, which had lately become grey, his face, which, though cheerful, was pale and emaciated, and the staff with which he supported his feeble steps, announced the rigour and duration of his confinement.† The fatal axe was borne before him reversed, and he was led by Sir William Kingston, the Constable of the Tower, with whom he had the trial of parting, as he was a dear friend, at a place called the "Old Swanne," supposed by Hunter to be that mentioned by Stow as situated near the School of St. Anthony in Threadneedle Street, but more likely the "Old Swan," or Swan Stairs, in Upper Thames Street, "where people," says Mr. Cunningham, "used to land, and walk to the other side of old London Bridge, rather than run the risk of what was called 'shooting the bridge.'"

As he had left the bar at Westminster, his only son had fallen at his feet, bathed in tears ; and now, as he came to the "Tower Wharffe," his best beloved child, his daughter Margaret, pressed through the guards in spite of their halberds, "and theare openlie in sight of them imbraced him, and took him aboute the neck and kissed him. Who well likinge her most naturall and deere daughterlie affection towards him gave her his fatherlie blessinge and manie godlie words of comfort besides. From whome, after she was departed, she not satisfied with the former sight of him, and like one that had forgotten herselfe, beinge all ravished with the entire love of her father, having respect neither to herselfe, nor to the presse of people and multitude that weare theare about him, suddainlie turned back again, ranne to him as before, tooke him about the necke and divers times kissed him lovinglie, and at last with a full and heavie heart, was faine to depart from him : the beholdinge whereof was to manie that were present soe lamentable that it made them for verie sorrow thearof to weepe and mourne." ‡

* Cresacre's Life of Sir T. More, edit. by Hunter, pp. 263-4.

† Lingard, vol. v. p. 42.

‡ Roper's Life of More, p. 115.

He remained a week further in prison, employing the interval in religious exercises and in writing letters with a coal, his only pen, of which the one to his daughter is as exquisitely pathetic as any thing in our language. "Deere Megg," he said in it, "I never liked your manner towards me better than when you kissed me last. For I like when daughterlie love and deere charitie hath noe leasure to looke to worldlie



SIR THOMAS MORE AT CHELSEA.

courtesie.”* Early on the 6th of July, Sir Thomas Pope brought him word from the king and council, that he should die that morning before nine o'clock. He heard the news cheerfully, comforted Sir Thomas Pope, who wept, and then asked leave that his daughter Margaret might be present at his burial. This being granted, he began to array himself with great care for the execution; only changing his garments for

* Roper's Life of More, p. 116.

meaner ones, at the special request of the Lieutenant of the Tower, for such became the perquisite of the executioner, who was but a javill or fellow. "Shall I account him a javill," asked More, "who will do me this day so singular a benefit? Nay, I assure you, were it cloth of gold I would think it well bestowed on him." So altering his gown, he sent the executioner one angel of gold instead. His fine wit and cheerfulness remained with him to the end. Going up the scaffold, which seemed weak and ready to fall, he said to the lieutenant, "I pray you, Mr. Lieutenant, see me safe up; and as to my coming down, let me shift for myself." When on the scaffold he attempted to address the people, but he was interrupted by the sheriff. He then said he died a faithful servant of God and the king; and after praying, observing some signs of shame in the executioner, he said, "Pluck up thy spirits, man, my neck is very short; take heed therefore of a stroke awry by which you will lose your credit." Then kneeling to receive the fatal stroke, he stayed the executioner an instant, whilst he held his beard aside, "which had grown long in the time of his durance," saying, "this hath never committed treason." These were his last words—his head being severed from his body at one blow. It was set up on London Bridge, where after remaining a month, it was bought by his daughter Margaret. For this she was summoned before the council, and imprisoned for a brief time.

More's headless body was interred in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula, standing at the north-west corner of the inner ward of the Tower. It is supposed to have been originally built by Henry I., and in its day must have been an interesting place. But modern, or rather as we should say, barbarous taste has committed irreparable injury. Better that it should have been suffered to remain a type of the sad fortunes of those whose dust lay within its walls, than be dressed up for modern use in modern fashion. Such a place has nothing to do with the present, but all with the past: what is spiritual, what is vital of constancy, truth, suffering, and patriotism remains for our English memories an immortal possession. For the rest, the vindictive cowardice, the bigotry, the persecution, should in their sad results lie there—dust covering mournful dust as with a solemn garment.

There can be no defence of More's bigotry in the cruel cases of Bilney and one or two others, except on the ground, that all men charged with any degree of authority in that age, were more or less persecutors. It mattered not if the cause changed sides—each party, as it became dominant, took the sword in hand, though, apart from points connected with religion, More was essentially liberal and a patriot. He was as opposed to the exactions of the crown and the greed of his Church as any of the earliest reformers could have been; and it is far from improbable that his very connexion with the administration of public justice led to his aversion of anything which savoured of change or excess. The man who wrote the *Utopia* could not, in an abstract sense, be a bigot; but he was governed, as all men are, more or less,

in action by the prevalent ethics of their age. "He took a part," says Mackintosh, "in the execution of the barbarous laws against heretics, as many judges since his time have enforced criminal laws which punish secondary crimes with death, and in which no good man, not inured to such inflictions by practice, could have taken a part." Out of this consideration, therefore, somewhat of a palliative arises, on grounds the same as the philosophic historian may, three or four centuries hence, award his denunciation and excuse for death by law as it exists at the present time. Whilst there is little doubt—such are the progressive stages of human opinion—that our generation will be considered as unenlightened for hanging a man, as that of More's for sending victims to the stake and block, for a belief in the real presence, or for a refusal to take the oath of supremacy.

The news of More's fate rung through Europe like a knell. Men were alike astounded at the deed and at the ruthless monarch, who, from this time, seems only to have lived to add to the atrocity and number of his crimes. The fame of his victim he could not shut out from the admiring love of posterity, or lessen its increase as ages bring the divine light of knowledge to men. So far we have More with us, and the justices are reversed. As for his perishable body, Aubrey, in his "Lives," asserts that it was removed to Chelsea Church, but it would seem from other and more distinct testimony that the old grey chapel of the Tower still contains his ashes. His beloved daughter, so celebrated for her learning and her likeness to him, died in 1544, and was buried in a chapel adjoining to the church of St. Dunstan's, in Canterbury, with her father's head in her arms, according to Lewis; though, on the more likely testimony of Anthony à Wood, it was inclosed in a leaden box, and so seen standing upon her coffin when the vault was opened in 1715 to inter one of the Roper family.

The shadow of Sir Thomas More had scarcely passed from the walls of the Beauchamp Tower, than, if the tradition be true, it received another, and almost as an illustrious a guest—Anne Boleyn. We have not space to enter into her history, except so far as to state our belief in her innocence. All the evidence which can be adduced weighs so much in her favour that a renewed verdict in her behalf seems almost superfluous, saving that in cases of this sort a favourable judgment cannot be too earnestly or too often repeated. It is a question to which belongs no middle ground between guilt and innocence; whilst criminality is so readily listened to and believed, and when believed it floats so surely down the common stream of report as to be soon caught up and taken for truth itself if no protest be made against the too credulous assumption. Anne Boleyn was a beautiful woman, and as such may have been more than usually weak in respect to the homage and admiration this beauty excited in a semi-barbarous and licentious age. But there seems no reason to doubt that in all essentials she was true to the king. The course of his diseased passions

and the bitter hate of the religionists who surrounded him, were not to be withstood, and she fell a victim to accusations as baseless as they were vile. Whilst if she was guilty in relation to the king himself, he was the tempter, and the question becomes one which, with many others of a kindred nature lying within the domain of ethics, may, as society advances, receive newer, nobler, and more generous interpretation.

On the 10th of June, 1540, the Beauchamp Tower received into its smallest dungeon at the foot of the spiral staircase another of Henry's illustrious victims—Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex. The cell wherein he was confined is yet shown. It is of the least possible dimensions, and must have been dark, pestiferous, and damp in the extreme. It was usually Henry's plan, when he had especial hatred against any of his victims, to thrust them into dungeons of this sort. Cromwell, however, had no wearisome imprisonment, for he was brought to the scaffold on the 28th of July, betraying in the interval an abject depression of spirits that contrasts strangely with the exalted fortitude of More and Fisher. Cromwell was, without doubt, a man of extraordinary ability and generous nature. He had served the king faithfully, though much of the work done had been effected in a way that reflects incredible infamy on both master and servant ; whilst his atrocious cruelty towards the Catholics, and his rigorous enforcement of the Act of Supremacy, had created him enemies on every side. He was hated by the nobility for his low birth, by the people for his share in the confiscation of church-property ; but the immediate cause of his downfall was, as in similar instances, the ungovernable lust of the king. Cromwell had been instrumental in bringing about Henry's marriage with Anne of Cleves ; and from the moment the king looked with dislike upon Flemish charms, there seems little reason to doubt but what the minister's ruin was resolved upon. It was from this period, or a little before, that Henry began to revert back to his old doctrines. He passed the Act of the Six Articles to enforce, amongst others, the obnoxious points of auricular confession, transubstantiation, and the celibacy of the priesthood. On the other hand, Cromwell had greatly favoured the Reformation, both by encouraging the publication of the Bible, and by countenancing the preachers of the reformed doctrines. Indeed, the chief points in his bill of attainder were those of heresy and treason. That he had favoured heretical preachers, encouraged their books, released them out of prison, and declared "that if the king would turn from the preachers of the new learning, that he, Cromwell, would not, but would fight in the field in his own person, with his sword in his hand, to defend it against the king himself." * "But the condemnation of a man unheard," says Sir J. Mackintosh, "is a case in which the strongest presumptions against the prosecution are warranted. That he was zealous for further reformation is certain ; that he may have used warm language to express his zeal, that he may have transgressed the bounds of official duty to favour the new opinion, are allegations in themselves not improbable ; but as we do not know

* Cott. MSS. Titus, b. i. Hist. of Reform. b. iii.

the witnesses who gave testimony, as we do not even know if any were examined, and, indeed, know nothing but that he was not heard in his own defence, it is perfectly evident that whether the words or deeds ascribed to Cromwell were really his or not, is a question without any decision, on which the judicial proceedings (if they deserve that name) may be pronounced to be altogether devoid of any shadow of justice." * Sir James Mackintosh, who gleaned his information on this point from the records appended to Burnet's great work, was not, perhaps, aware that the MS.† we refer to contains the original bill of attainder, in which the chief point of treason, that of personal contumacy against the king, is interpolated by another hand; thus proving that when the bill was drawn up, space was left for an after insertion of such trumped-up charge as would best colour with justice the kingly resolution to destroy. However, the pit into which Cromwell fell, he had dug for himself. He had caused, in spite of opposition, the Act of Attainder without reference to defence, to pass through parliament; and by its aid, the Marchioness of Exeter and the aged Countess of Salisbury had been brought to the block, without either trial or defence; an iniquity that seems scarcely possible in a country and to a people that already possessed Magna Charta, and were yet to place upon their statute-books the Petition of Rights and the Writ of Habeas Corpus. Another proof of the enormous irresponsible power of a minister of the crown in those days, is given in the same manuscripts by the numerous memoranda, or "remembrances," of Cromwell, in his own handwriting—a fine, strong, even hand, by the way. Amongst others, are many like the following:—"Item. That this day I and my Lorde of Worcester be in hand with the Lord Darcy at the Toure." "To send Guedow to the Toure to be rakked." "To advertize the King of the ordering of Maister Fisher." "When Maister Fisher shall go." Thus willing the beheading of a bishop, or the iniquitous torture of the rack, as coolly as a minister in our present day shoots partridges in the vacation, or orders a carriage in Long-Acre.

So fell this great minister. One whom a less degree of irresponsible power, and an age when the duties of a servant of the crown were better understood, might have rendered of more account in relation to the state and the liberties of the people. As it was, one circumstance alone bespeaks that native greatness, which transcends so far mere titular aggrandizement. He never forgot or betrayed those who had served him; thus the love of Wolsey, and the admiration of a great honest spirit like that of Latimer, herald to posterity no common man. An old survey of Wimbledon Manor, taken in 1617, still points out the site of the cottage in which he was born. It is therein called the "Smith's Shop," lying west of the highway leading from Putney to the Upper Gate, and on the south side of the highway from Richmond to Wandsworth. It is curious, that this manor came afterwards into his possession, and that it was here that Wolsey, proceeding on his way to Esher, was overtaken and presented with a ring, as a token of the continuance of the king's favour.

* Hist. of Eng. vol. ii. p. 227.

† Cott. MSS. Titus, b. i.

CHAPTER III.

THE TOWER (CONCLUDED): AND ITS ILLUSTRIOUS IMPRISONED:—ROBERT DEVEREUX,
EARL OF ESSEX, AND SIR JOHN ELIOT.

OF the towers ranged round the inner ballium walls, and severally named, beginning from the south-west corner, the Bell, Beauchamp, Develin or Devereux, Flint, Bowyer, Brick, Martin, Constable, Broad-Arrow, and Salt towers, the next most famous to the Beauchamp Tower is, perhaps, the Develin or Devereux Tower, so called from having been the prison of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the soldier, the scholar, and the dear friend of Shakespeare's Southampton. As we have already said, it would be impossible to tenant these many prisons with their respective occupants, even were their number known, and connected, as many were, with some of the saddest tragedies in English history. But between the end of the reign of Henry VIII. and that of Queen Elizabeth, they were more numerous and fully as illustrious as any of their predecessors; including Catherine Howard, Thomas Lord Seymour, the Duchesses of Somerset and Northumberland, Jane Grey, and Dudley her husband, without enumerating those who suffered for points immediately connected with religion.

At the close of the reign of Elizabeth, when Essex was made a sacrifice to his popularity, his toleration, and his inexpressibly weak and foolish attempt to raise the city of London in his behalf, we find that both questions of civil and religious liberty had arrived at a new point of development. From the date of the fall of Cromwell, indeed from the year previous, when the Six Articles Act was passed, the principles of the Reformation retrograded, or, at least, were stationary. In the next short reign this Act was repealed, but the ecclesiastical supremacy was again assumed as a right by the crown. A new Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, was compiled, and an Act passed for its uniform use. Though confessedly only an adaptation of the several Romish missals to the service of the reformed doctrines, this use was enforced by tremendous penalties, whether agreeing or not with individual opinion in relation to religious worship; thus founding religion upon the wisdom and policy of man, and not on the truth and power of God. To this was added an enforcement of rites and ceremonies equally obnoxious. With the reign of Mary, persecution changed sides, and the Tower received and sent forth a fresh array of victims. In the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth another Act of Uniformity was passed, and enforced by

severer penalties ; and the Court of High Commission was created for "exercise under the crown of all spiritual or ecclesiastical jurisdiction." From this date, or soon after, we have the nominal rise of the Puritans, though the new opinions had all along been connected with a greater or less degree of opposition to a pompous ritual. But herself attached to a splendid worship, and enforcing its observance with the utmost tyranny, Elizabeth soon found her best class of bishops opposed to her, and the repugnance of a large part of the clergy, as well as the people, to the ceremonies with which she would not dispense, soon showed itself in irregular transgressions of the uniformity preached by statute. It is usually said, that doctrine had not as yet been touched upon. In this, as an historical assertion, we have no belief. The overthrow of a vast code of superstition once effected, the more advanced minds, it may be certain, entered upon the consideration of those abstract points of religious faith so full of interest to the thoughtful. Nor were such speculations confined by cautious thinkers to their own hearts, or to the domestic hearth. It is certainly true that, so far as regarded the majority of the people, it was not till they had been hunted down like wild beasts, that they began to question the source of the authority exercised over their civil rights, and the quality and worth of the religious opinions enforced upon them ; but it may be taken for a surety, even reasoning only on common principles of the human mind, that when once the preposterous assumption of infallibility had, as regarded religion, been cast to the winds, the noblest spirits of the great change enlarged the view of their religious observation, and thus were taught, however limited it might be in the beginning, that though they judged and accepted with difference minor points of doctrine, it mattered not so that the great essentials of their faith were the same, and that the more immediate result of such common understanding was a greater purity of individual life, and a wider view of civil responsibility.

We date the beginning of these elementary points of toleration, from the period of the Marian persecution. Men so highly educated as were the majority of the exiles, learned, we may be sure, more than austerity in manner and doctrine from their intimacy with the great Reformers, and thus, at their return in the calmer and earlier days of Queen Elizabeth, the yet unnamed Puritans, if one in the great essentials of faith, most certainly differed in minor points of doctrine. Here was an advance of the great principles of toleration, even though limited. What had been mere theory to More, a splendid day-dream in his "Utopia," which he did not act upon in his intercourse with society, was now in a degree active amongst men like Knollys, Walsingham, Sadler, and others ; and even the temporizing, cautious policy of Lord Burleigh and Sir Nicholas Bacon may be traced, in some degree, to this advance. They were good Protestants, nevertheless ; and had Elizabeth been more guided by them than by her bishops in matters of religion, the latter part of her reign would have been less one bloody tragedy for the vindication of supremacy and uniformity.

This combination of vital religious faith with toleration for the opinions of others, never met in more exquisite combination than in the character of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. If within this combination no very high principles of civil and political morality were admitted, it was simply because no enlarged views of the intimate relation between religious, civil, and political policy yet existed, or, at least, were popularly recognised. That blending of the human and divine, was reserved for a new advance, when Eliot and Selden, Hampden and Pym, grew great upon the scene of English politics, and showed that religious and civil liberty were one.

Though the assertion wears the appearance of a paradox, Essex's virtues begot his vices, and Elizabeth was herself the parent of those sins she afterwards punished on the block. Whatever may be said as to the greatness of her intellect, it was allied with an atrocious meanness of heart, that makes her memory despicable ; for, whatever may be admitted in respect to the manners and customs of the age, and the dependence of the crown on pecuniary resources of this nature, there was nothing imperial in the way in which she received presents, eat and drank at her subjects' expense, and cast pecuniary burdens upon those chivalric enough to bear them. She thus impoverished Essex's father by forcing him to raise the levies and supplies for her war with Ireland. When, after his premature death, young Essex succeeded to the earldom, not even Lord Burleigh's careful nursing could effect much for the impoverished estate. Generous to a fault, young Essex, whilst at Cambridge, added so far to these difficulties as to bring down the anger of his guardian, Burleigh, and to necessitate the sale of more than one manor. Thus, when drawn into the circle of the court by the solicitations of the Earl of Leicester, who had become his mother's second husband, it was not otherwise than likely that his comparative need, joined to the expenses consequent upon his sudden aggrandizement, first to the rank of Master, next to that of General, of the Horse, would make him the slave of those monopolies by which Elizabeth enriched her favourite at the expense of her people, and which, when suddenly withdrawn in after years, led, more than any other cause, to that silly insurrection, so utterly unworthy of him. Men may uprise when liberties are trampled on—their cause is God's cause, for it is that of all ; but that is unworthy of the name of patriotism in which private instead of public motives prevail, as in this case of Essex. We have but to look at the sublime self-sacrifice of Eliot, the acts of Hampden, to understand of what elements true patriotism is composed.

The continual squabbles of Elizabeth and her favourite appear more like those of petulant and ill-governed children than of a dignified woman, and a man then at the most chivalric period of life. He first offended her by joining the expedition to Spain, under Norris and Drake, in 1589 ; next, by marrying the widow of his friend, Sir Philip Sidney, and the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham ; but the dispute on which rested so many fatal after-consequences, arose between them as to the choice

of some fit and able person to command affairs in Ireland. "In his views for the government of that country," says an able writer, "Essex anticipated the progress of justice and reason by centuries. He would achieve pacification by composition rather than by the sword. The Irish, he said, were alienated from the English as well for religion as government. He would overcome this alienation by toleration in the one, and by an improved system in the other; in short, he anticipated, by three centuries, the principles which were advocated by a sense of justice, and a love of freedom, in 1806, by Fox and Grey, and carried into effect by a wise and fearless policy, in 1829, by Wellington and Peel." * Indeed, his opinions generally in respect to war and coercion were immensely in advance of his time. For he says in his beautiful letter to Anthony Bacon, "My affection, neither in truth nor in reason, is set on warr. Soe in judgment I have ever thought warrs the diseases and sicknesses, and peace the true, naturall, healthfull temper of all estates. I have thoughte excellent myndes should come to the warrs as chirurgeons doe to their patients, when noe other remeddie will serve; or as men in particular questions are allowed to challeng combatts, when there is no way but by the sowrd to prove the truth of their plea, and to obtaine their detained right. Yea, I will goe one degree further. I thinke the prince or state offends as much against justice and reason that omitteth a faire occasion of makinge an honourable and sage peace, as they which rashlie and causeleslie move an unjust warr." †

Upon a proposition for the reduction of Ireland, he was appointed to the command of the army, against his own inclination, as it would seem, and strongly against the advice of Bacon. For such command, in which the ablest men had failed, both friends and enemies knew he was unfit, both by reason of his rash impetuosity of temper and tolerant views; but his enemies, as it appears from the best evidence, pressed this nomination on him, in order that his assurance and imprudence might lessen the queen's partiality, and destroy her confidence in his ability. The result proved the truth of his friends' fears. He failed, as any other general would have failed, where an embittered venal faction at home resented even such small exercise of authority as that of appointing Southampton to the command of his cavalry, where troops and supplies were insufficient, and where the report by the Irish lords of the council on the state of the country proved to be grossly incorrect. Finding himself thus thwarted, he rashly determined upon a sudden return to England, in order to plead his own cause to the queen: for this purpose he acceded to a temporary truce with the Earl of Tyrone, the rebel chief he had been sent out to subdue; and he likewise charged himself with twenty-one propositions for the pacification of Ireland. The larger part of these so belonged to the simplest principles of justice as to make it

* Continuation of Mackintosh's Hist. vol. iv. p. 109.

† Vindication of War with Spain. Published 1729, pp. 3, 4.

appear incredible that they could be brought within the term rebellious, even in that age of utter injustice in all which related to Ireland. But such was afterwards the case. Extirpation, not pacification, had been intended, and, therefore, any proposal for toleration, or anything coloured by the name of justice, was at once assumed to be criminal by those who, for place and power, sought the ruin of the generous and chivalric favourite.

Though startled by his return, Elizabeth's first reception was gracious ; but in a few hours the sinister counsels of those around her prevailed. He was summoned to appear before the council next day. There he was charged with his proceedings in Ireland, but he conducted himself with temper, humility, and discretion.

From thence he was transferred to York House, and the custody of Lord Keeper Egerton. Soon after this, he was seized with serious illness, and Elizabeth, for a time, relented. But his great sin in her eyes was his popularity. This was so extraordinary, as Warton says, "He scarce ever went out of England, or even left London, on the most frivolous enterprize, without a pastoral in his praise, or a panegyric in metre, which was sold or sung in the streets." * Besides this we have Shakespeare's direct testimony to Essex's popularity :—

" Were now the general of our gracious empress
(As, in good time he may) from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him ? " †

Nor was this lessened by his present disgrace. Upon his recovery, he was put upon trial in the Lord Keeper's house, where he still remained. The three main charges against him were those of not attacking the Earl of Tyrone in Ireland, granting a truce, and leaving his government contrary to the queen's orders. At this point of Essex's misfortunes, both Coke and Bacon earned eternal infamy by the part they took against him. Bacon, in an especial degree ; for Essex had been to him, not only personally, an ardent, generous, and most truthful friend, but also to his brother Anthony. The latter he had made his secretary, taken to Essex House, and supported free of all charge, from the time his embarrassments and the dilapidation of Gorbaham had rendered such friendly aid of value. But gratitude, truth, and justice, were forgotten. Francis Bacon saw that Essex's fortunes were like a stream at ebb ; for himself he sought place and power with base avidity ; he pleaded against his friend ; he coloured his errors with enriching art and power, as though he were a Titian, painting a scarlet robe of sin ; but, in so doing, he did that which no advocacy can clear away, and which all posterity must lament. Essex escaped, however, with

* History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 341.

† Henry V. Chorus to Act V.

the sequestration of all his offices, except that of the Master of the Horse. He was now removed to his own house, and confined there under the nominal custody of Sir Richard Berkeley; but soon relieved of this constraint, though forbidden the range of the court, or the presence of the queen, he departed into the country with his countess.

Had he continued there, borne his change of fortune with magnanimity, and put the noble style he wrote to some worthier use than that of writing letters of abject solicitation and hollow flattery to the ruthless woman, who, dreading him as a rival, had resolved upon his ruin, his fate might have been different, and his name more effectively connected with the literature of his period than it is. But from his necessities he had no resource. He was compelled to make application for the renewal of his patent for farming sweet wines, which was coarsely refused, though sued for in a spirit of humility. This refusal involved his ruin, for the income he had derived from this monopoly amounted, it is said, to the enormous yearly sum of 50,000*l.*, but which the queen now wished "to be husbanded for herself." * She, in fact, looked upon these monopolies as "the principal and head pearl in her crown and diadem;" but her parliament was beginning to look closely into these iniquitous exactions, and almost the last act of her public life, now drawing to a close, was a favourable answer to the bold and determined attack of the Commons upon this question.

Irritated by this refusal, by the queen's pertinacious and ungenerous conduct, stimulated as doubtless it was by both Cecil and Raleigh, her irascible noble gave loose to the whirlwind of his passions. There can be no defence of Elizabeth's conduct, for it was coarse, vindictive, unrelenting, and she deserved to die as she did—the victim of a great remorse. At the same time, so immeasurably above all other considerations is a nation's peace and welfare, so essentially is patriotism an unselfish and unimpersonal virtue, as to leave nothing to be said in favour of Essex's subsequent conduct. This much, however, may be admitted in respect to it. He was not disloyal at heart; his only motive seems to have been, to remove his enemies from around the person of the queen, and to plead personally a self-vindication. He was otherwise barred access, and as it has been well said in relation to this point, "in a constitutional monarchy the sovereign may be compelled to dismiss favoured, and employ obnoxious ministers, by the expression of public opinion, through the petitions of the people or the votes of parliament. Under the despotic government of Elizabeth, it could be effected only by conspiracy and force." But he was divided between his ambition and his scruples of conscience. It was thus obvious, that he was unfitted, by a certain weakness of character, either to play the part of a conspirator, or that of a patriot alone desirous of opening up wiser councils. His character, therefore, was precisely one on which clemency and forgiveness would have produced at this moment the best effect, the

* Winwood's Memorials, vol. i. p. 271.

truest repentance; for there was nothing base, nothing venal, nothing mean, in his nature. And in so acting, and in transforming, as it were, virtues into vices, Elizabeth effected one of the worst acts of impolicy that marked her reign. She knew this when too late; she satiated her Tudor vengeance and jealousy, but at a cost that made her personally the greater victim. This much, too, must be said for Essex, that in whatever he might have done in regard to a change of councils, it would have been with a view to the correction of the abuses of the government; for "raised by the commons, he would have raised the commons, in his turn. Sincerely religious, but enlightened and humane, he would have deprived religious persecution of its fangs;" though it may be doubted whether his religious views, so far, in regard to toleration, were they in advance of the age, would have met with anything like sympathy or acceptance amongst the larger majority of the Puritans.

Though unmolested, he was not unobserved. Spies and informers were abroad in all directions; whilst his confidence in his own popularity, so far as it might be turned



ESSEX HOUSE.

to the advantage of an uprising in his favour, appears to have been too great. Various plans had been already suggested by his friends to secure his access to the queen, and consultations were held at Drury-house, then occupied by Lord Southampton; intrigues were entered into with James in Scotland, as to his succession, and it seems to have been finally resolved, the city being considered favourable, to seize the gate of the palace and its various chambers, and that then Essex should "make his way into the presence of the queen, humbly entreat her to remove his enemies from her person, and call a parliament." A message from the council hastened the catastrophe.

On Sunday morning, the 8th of February, 1601, Essex having summoned his friends, was surrounded by about three hundred at his house, then called Essex House in the Strand. The fortunes of this place were already celebrated. Its site had originally formed a portion of the Temple, called the Outer Temple. In time it passed into the hands of the bishops of Exeter, who built here "Exeter House, which was

their inn or London lodging," and was "first amongst other buildings remarkable for greatness on the river of Thames." After the Reformation, it passed through several hands, till purchased by Essex, from his celebrated father-in-law, Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Whilst in his possession, it was probably little altered; for in a rare tract by Sir Henry Wotton, he says, "I doe not remember that my Lord of Essex in all his life-time did build or adorn any house; the queen, perchance, spending his time, and himself his means, or otherwise inclining to more popular ways." * Pepys, who saw it a century after this date, describes it as "a large and ugly house." On the other hand, Stow speaks of its large hall, and judged by the other bishops' inns, which were notoriously the best houses in London, we may certainly entertain some doubts as to Pepys' judgment in architecture. Spenser refers to it in his "Prothalamion," or "Spensall Verse."

"There when they came whereas those bricky towres
The which on Themmes brode aged backe doe ryde,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers
There whylome wont the Templar Knights to hyde
Till they decayd through pride;
Next where unto stands a stately place
Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great lord which therein wont to dwell
Whose want too well, now feels my freendles case." †

As the Strand was then, and its glorious river, not unaptly called "the silver-streaming Themmes," the site of Essex House was lovely. The Temple Gardens were in close vicinity, whilst to the west lay some of the noblest mansions of the London of Elizabeth. Only separated by Milford Lane, ran the gardens of Arundel House, and as we see them laid out in Aggas's plan, its own were extensive. Therein Essex passed most of his time with his wife, after he was, in a degree, freed from the attendance of Sir Richard Berkeley. Essex House, of which the reader may be pleased to learn some fragments yet remain in the walls and foundation of the present Unitarian Chapel, ‡ was eminently a "hallowed spot." Shakespeare and Spenser must have often trod its floors, for Southampton, Shakespeare's patron, was Essex's truest friend, and together they were the worthiest encouragers of the literature of their time. Whatever has been said to the contrary, the queen was no patron of literature, "and if," says Warton, speaking of the poems so profusely dedicated to Essex, "adulation were anywhere justifiable, it must be when paid to the man who endeavoured to save Spenser

* Parallel between the Earl of Essex and Duke of Buckingham.

† Spenser's Works, by Todd, vol. viii. p. 106.

‡ After being used as an auction-room, this portion of the original house was fitted up as a chapel, and on Sunday, April 17, 1774, it was opened as a place of Unitarian worship by the Rev. T. Lindsey. Dr. Franklin and Priestley were both present.—*Rutts' Life of Priestley*, vol. i. p. 228-232.

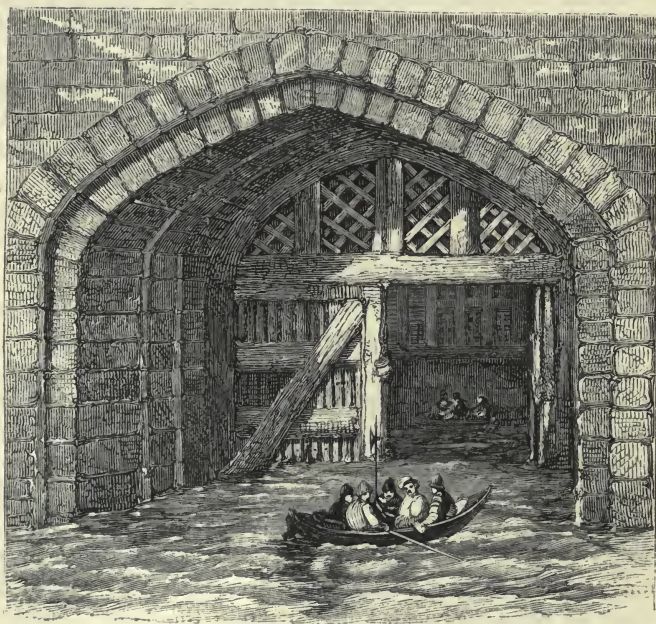
from starving in the streets of Dublin, and who buried him in Westminster Abbey, with becoming solemnity." The house was further hallowed by being the birth-place of Essex's famous son, the general of the Parliamentary forces. Here, too, were held some of the most important of the state conferences of his time, and here he died, and lay in state some days, dressed in the buff coat in which he had fought at Edgehill. His life was not a happier one than that of his father, saving that a portion of it ran through times in which the principles of civil and religious liberty made advance at that austere reckoning up of the venality of courts, and the faithlessness of princes.

Essex's attempt to raise the city proved, as it was likely to do, a complete failure. Before he could even leave his house with his friends and followers, admittance was demanded in the queen's name. This, after some debate, was allowed to Egerton, the Earl of Worcester, and two others ; but the parley being interrupted by the voices of the multitude outside, Essex sallied forth with about two hundred persons poorly armed. Though joined by other lords in Fleet Street and at Ludgate, he found far other than the reception he had expected, the government having already exercised its vigilant power by demanding the citizens to keep peacefully within doors. Smith, the sheriff, who seems to have lived in Fenchurch Street, and who, probably, being in the pay of the court, had falsely promised Essex to assist him with the force of a thousand men belonging to the train-bands, also deserted him. In the meanwhile Burleigh's secretary, Cecil's eldest brother, and the Earl of Cumberland, had proclaimed Essex a traitor. Wildly rushing out of the sheriff's house, he sought to make his way back to the Strand, but he found his progress barred both at Ludgate and St. Paul's. "Being deserted of divers his gallant followers," says a contemporary letter preserved by Nichols, "from thence the Earl went into Fryday Street, and being faynte, desired drinke, which was given him and at his request unto the cittizens. The great chayne which crosseth the streete was held up to give him passage ; after that he took boat at Queenhithe, and so came to his house with full purpose to die in his own defence. But when he beheld the great artillery and the queen's force about the house, being sore vexed with the cries of ladies, about ten of the clock at night he yielded himself unto the Lord Admirall, earnestly desiring his trial to be speedie and honourable."

It was too late and too tempestuous to attempt to shoot London Bridge that night. Essex and Southampton were, therefore, taken to Lambeth Palace, where Whitgift, who had been tutor to Lord Essex, was then residing. Thence, next day, they were rowed to the Tower in a state barge, their less noble followers, though four of them were lords and two knights, being conveyed thither the same day in a common boat.

The access then from the Thames to the southern sweep of the Tower-ditch was, as may be seen in the old survey, by a little tunnel running beneath the "wharfe."

This led directly into the famous private passage beneath St. Thomas's tower, itself built over the ditch, and still in excellent preservation. By this state-prisoners were so usually brought, that at length it obtained its present appellation of "Traitor's Gate." The interior of this retains much of its original appearance. Looked at through a window, made in modern days to open into it, from the little tower of the gate in the south-east angle, it has an extraordinary appearance. The oozy floor contrasts with the vaulted-pointed roof rising from small round columns of great beauty, whilst the gates, Tower-ward and Thames-ward, still seem to cast terrible and



TRAITORS' GATE.

significant shadows. Indeed, if there be one place in the whole Tower of London more sad and ominous than another, it is this ; for it exists in almost its pristine state, and on its Tower-ward steps may be said yet to linger the solemn footprints of mingled innocence and guilt. Directly opposite to it lies the Bloody Tower, the gateway beneath which is still the principal entrance into the inner ballium, and, for many centuries, the only one, with the exception of a small gateway in the Cradle Tower, from which a drawbridge seems to have been occasionally cast on to the wharf, for

the use of those who occupied the "royal apartments" or palace in the east angle of the fortress.

Essex's imprisonment was but a short one. On Thursday, the 19th day of February, he and Southampton were arraigned in Westminster Hall. Without doubt both had been guilty of high treason in inciting the people to rise against the government, and this without power of denial, for it had been committed in the sight of thousands. But innocence itself would not have saved them from the worst verdict of such an iniquitous tribunal as that before which they were brought. Of the five-and-twenty lords who sat in judgment on Essex, two at least were his mortal enemies; and the friendship of two others, Burleigh and Cumberland, who had made themselves conspicuous in proclaiming him traitor, was more than doubtful, whilst the number of judges present to advise on points of law seem incredible. One judge was quite enough to decide the question of guilt or innocence; but when there sat a lord-steward, two chief justices, a chief baron, and five puisne judges, and a verdict of guilty notoriously the only one that would satisfy either the malign hate of the Cecils, or the implacable vengeance of the queen, what innocence might escape? Raleigh was also present as captain of the guard;* and, worst of all—and he would have himself thought could he have read the austere judgment of posterity—was Bacon, whom Essex had, in the bounteous spirit of Providence, called "friend." A mistaken notion of his duty to the crown may be urged as the plea of his thus turning traitor against Essex; but the same excuse cannot be made for that after use of his pen in defamation of the dead. It was—as it has been lately well said—"an act of clearly superfluous baseness." There are sins which have no palliative—acts which, to use Bacon's own words, are "unhappy in whatever light posterity may view them," and these undoubtedly were of the number.

Undismayed by the confessions of the trembling accomplices who had betrayed him—confessions which seem to have been obtained by the ordinary shallow trick of despotism, that of a pretence that their secrets were already known, Essex, though disgracefully interrupted, replied, with a cheerful countenance and manly courage, "God, which knoweth the secrets of all hearts, knoweth that I never sought the crown of England, nor ever wished to be a higher degree than a subject. I greatly endeavoured to have brought my conscience to prove, only by seeking to secure my access to the presence of the queen, that I might have speedily unfolded my griefs unto her majesty against my private enemies, but not to have shed one drop of their blood. And this, my lord, I speak to the end I might put off all imputation of being a hypocrite or an atheist."† Bacon replied to this with bitterness, comparing Essex to the Duke of Guise. No witnesses were sworn and examined with the exception of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who was brought forward, pale and trembling, from the

* State Trials, vol. i. p. 1335.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 1354.

nearest prison, to help to lie away the life of the man who had been an unexampled trusting friend, and who had bestowed upon him, amongst other trusts, the government of Plymouth. Cecil was also brought forward to speak against Essex in the matter of the succession. He seemed to triumph before that basely-constituted court; but Southampton's corroboration of Essex's real meaning, Cecil's notorious bitterness and envy, and the light which time and state-papers have shed upon many matters of Cecil-Machiavelism, have given another and truer view to the judgment of posterity.

Upon being declared guilty by the court, Essex spoke again to the effect that he was ready to die; and that his conscience was free from atheism and popery. We may judge, by this reiterated declaration of his religious opinions, what consequences had been attached to his noble principles of toleration, and that which Wotton says, "That he could depart his affections between two extreames, for though he bore alwayes a kind of filial reverence towards Dr. Whitgift, both before and after he was archbishop, yet, on the other side, he did not a little love and tender Master Cartwright," * had given offence on either hand, both to the court party and the more narrow-minded of the Puritans.

Sentence of death was passed both against Essex and Southampton with cruel explicitness. Before leaving the court, according to the somewhat unreliable testimony of one of Cecil's letters to Winwood, Essex declared that the confederates who had accused him "had been principal inciters of him, not he of them, ever since August last, to work his access to the queen by force"† This accusation was as unworthy of Essex as the subsequent confession. It would have been more magnanimous to have let statements such as those made by the worthless parasites, Cuffe and Gorges, depend for their value upon the character of the men. But from this point, beyond the magnanimity to die, Essex weakly prostrated his spirit before those who both, in a civil and religious sense, were most unworthy.

The trial closed at about six in the evening; immense crowds pressing round Westminster Hall to learn the result. When this was divulged throughout London, "Many forsooke their suppers, and came hastily into the streets to see the Earl of Essex as he returned to the Tower, who went a swift pace, bending his face towards the earth, and would not looke upon any of them, though some spake directly to him."‡

The next morning, the lords of the council, who seem to have had the same predilection for meddling with matters of religion as the queen, sent Dove, dean of Norwich, to the Tower, to urge Essex to repentance and confession. But he was immovable; still repeating, as he had done to his old tutor, Whitgift, whilst at Lambeth, on the night of his arrest, "That in anything he had done he was not guilty of

* Parallel.

† Memorials, vol. i. p. 300.

‡ Nichols' Letter, in vol. iii. p. 547.

offending Almighty God.”* The whole of the conduct of the government at this point, as well as after the execution, betrays an uneasy sense of its own position ; and the pertinacity with which it sought what it called “ A declaration of treason,” only proves the unpopularity of its judgment upon Essex. Guarded against a professed minister of the dominant Church, Essex was not proof against the wiles of Ashton, his chaplain, a profound hypocrite who had taken his instructions from the court. Left to himself, a mind so enlarged as his would have found peace and consolation in those same general principles of divine faith, as had already nerved and sustained More, and had yet to prove their infinite worth to the immortal patriot of whom we have yet to speak. But such fortitude of conduct, such vindication of act, neither suited the purpose of his enemies nor the vindictive fear of the queen : and unfortunately, the noblest virtues of Essex, his courage, his love of truth, his generosity of character, were now to him, as it were, vices. Roused by Ashton’s arts, and amazed by the catalogue of sins with which he was accused by one from whom he had naturally expected consolation ; called a hypocrite, a papist, an atheist, a usurper, Essex entered at once into a vindication of his motives and conduct. This was what was exactly sought by Cecil-Machiavelism. For Ashton answering, that these were general speeches, “ vain-glorious pretences,” that he must go to eternal damnation if he did not confess to him (Ashton), “ the watchman of his soul,” all his grievous sins, Essex to prove again the innocence of his designs, and the clearness of his conscience, named to him several worthy persons of honour and condition, who had been engaged with him. This point gained, Ashton turned upon the penitent, and declared that the Earl must now make a full and formal confession, or *he would reveal what had passed*, as well as stand witness against him ! Cecil and three of the lords of the council were, therefore, summoned at Essex’s request. The “ confession ” thus obtained was, as might be expected, of the most abject character, descending even to the question of forgiveness from those mortal enemies standing in his presence, and a humble suit to the queen, “ That he might have the power to die privately in the Tower.” † That Essex seems to have made some sort of confession there appears to be no doubt ; but that it tallied with the one “ *afterwards* set down in writing,” or with the matter of Cecil’s letter to Winwood—a self-vindication, be it recollected, made to answer its purpose at the French court, is “ suspicious to the core.” But this was not enough. Though Ashton had already “ ploughed up ” the penitent’s heart, two of the Church divines, Mountford, prebendary of Westminster, and Barlowe, who preached a sermon at St. Paul’s Cross on the Sunday following the execution, in which the rigour of the government was vindicated, were sent to the Tower to assist in preparing the prisoner to die. Their task was comparatively easy. The venal hypocrisy of Ashton had prepared the way, and there was no difficulty

* Barlowe’s Funeral Sermon at St. Paul’s Cross, March 1, 1601. † Winwood, Mem. vol. i. p. 301.

now in working upon the deep religious sincerity of his character ; and what has been acutely called his “unhappy facility of persuasion.” They led him to make another confession, afterwards carefully appended to the “Declaration of Treasons,” drawn up by no less a hand than that of Bacon’s, “That he was full of thankfulness to God that he was justly spewed out of the realme,” that he desired “God to forgive him his great, his bloodie, and his infectuous sinne, which was a leprosie that had infected farre and neare.”*

His desire to die in private is equally suspicious. His popularity was one of the terrors of the court ; and though Barlowe, in his venal sermon, made it appear that Essex at the last looked upon the people’s love “as vanity and an Egyptian reed,” it was only when iniquitous arts in the name of religion had debased alike his noble heart and mind. In a word, the whole was so managed by subtle enmity, as “to purposely give the queen a frightful impression of the criminality of his designs, to impress her with the notion that his life would be death to her, and thus to ensure and hasten his execution.”†

It is said that Elizabeth vacillated when the warrant for Essex’s execution was brought to her to sign. We do not believe it—though she might affect to do so. An affectation of mercy was one of this extraordinary woman’s arts, by which, as she well knew, she gained popularity as well as power to gratify her imperious will. No ! she never vacillated from the hour when she heard from her court ladies that Essex looked upon her as an old woman, crooked in mind as well as body. The only wonder is “she did not send him instantly to the Tower, and next day to the scaffold.” Of love she was incapable—of what constitutes power she had too acute a perception to share it with another. She inherited her mother’s vanity, her father’s lust—the latter not less strong for its subjugation by her wonderful intellect !

There is reason to think that Essex indulged in the hope of pardon to the last. He took leave of no one ; not even of those present at his execution, and never mentioned his wife or children.‡ These facts seem to us to give somewhat an air of truth to the disputed story of the ring.

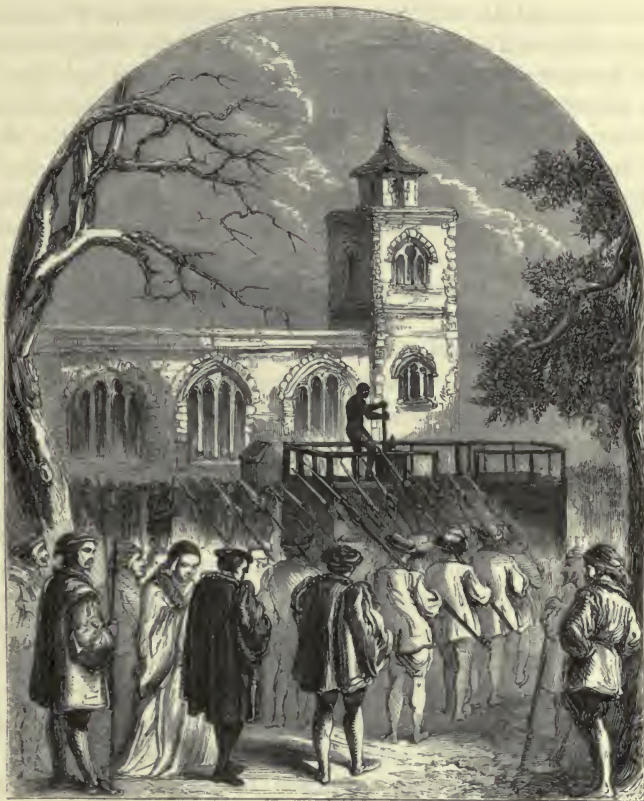
It was Ash Wednesday, the 25th of February, that, at eight o’clock in the morning, Essex was brought out to die in the court-yard of the Tower—that solemn spot so near his prison, and the chapel where so much consecrated dust already rested. It was then, we believe, surrounded by a grassplot, the spot where the scaffold stood being ominously bare. A form was placed near it, on which sat the Earls of Cumberland, and Hartford, the lords Brindon, Howard, Darey, and Compton. The lieutenant, with sixteen partizans of the guard, were sent for the prisoner, “who came in a gowne of wrought velvet, a blacke sattin sute, a felt hat blacke, a little

* The Earl of Essex, his Confession. Imprinted 1601.

Mackintosh Hist. of England, vol. iv. p. 106.

‡ Lingard.

ruffe about his necke,* and accompanied by the three divines who had reduced his conscience to such a pitiable condition. Arrived at the scaffold, he took off his hat and made a speech that reads like the "confessions," though there seems to gleam through it a light from within the shadows thus cast so darkly on his soul by statecraft and hypocrisy; for he prayed that the queen might have "a wise and understanding



EXECUTION OF THE EARL OF ESSEX AT THE TOWER.

heart" (as well he might) and spoke of "private prayer," as though this outward speaking were but the prayer of form. At length, this hypocritical farce was ended. He put off his doublet, showing "a scarlet wastecoate," and "lying flatte along on the bordes, and laying downe his head and fitting it upon the blocke, his head was

* Letter in Nichols' *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. iii. p. 547. —

severed from his bodie by the axe at three stroaks, but the first deadly and absolutely depriving all sence and motion. The hangman was beaten as hee returned thence ; so that the Sheriffes of London were called to assist and rescue him from such as would have murdered him.”* Essex was buried in the chapel, under the care of the Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Norfolk.

The “declaration,” written by Bacon, was published, and the sermon preached ; but the people received both with disgust. Clarendon calls them “pestilential libels.” From this date Elizabeth’s popularity rapidly waned ; she found, when it was too late, that her mistake was a great one, and that her own hand had signed the death-warrant of a chivalrous and true servant, whom her cruelty and insults had driven to rebellion, to whom her tenderness and forgiveness (and women, even of the loftiest intellect, can never well or with impunity set aside the exercise of a pity and tenderness naturally theirs) would have brought the truest penitence, and been at the same time a sublime sort of punishment for a sin, that, without paradox, was generated by virtue, and by a sincere desire for her queenly favour.

Henceforth, when she stirred abroad, no acclamations of her people met her ear ; her counsellors were received with loud expressions of disgust and abhorrence ; whilst the apathy with which despotism had been allowed to exercise its unrestrained ferocity was avenged, as soon as James ascended the throne ; for he was gone who was alone capable of making fresh conditions for the privileges of parliament and the liberties of the people. As it was, they had to suffer till a new and glorious race of men arose and began their immortal contest with despotism.

Without doubt Essex was one of the most remarkable men of his age. He has been considered the equal of Sir Philip Sidney in genius and accomplishments, and superior, indeed superior to all his contemporaries, in regard to toleration. It was considered one of the heaviest charges on his trial that he would have given toleration to the Irish Catholics, for Catholicism in the age of Elizabeth was looked upon and punished as idolatry. Equally liberal in his literary tastes, he would, but for his father-in-law, the Earl of Leicester, have followed a much more studious life. “He it was,” says Wotton, “that drew him first into the fatal circle from a kind of resolved privateness, at his home at Lampsie, in South Wales.”† His Latin style was excellent, his English still more exquisite—it stands as distinct from all other prose of his age as Shakespeare’s poetry from the poetry of all other men. His chief prose composition extant, and from which we have already quoted, is his “Vindication of the War with Spaine,” in a letter to Anthony Bacon. Apart from its obsolete politics, it is a noble fragment. “We have nowhere in our early writers,” says Hallam, speaking of it, “a flow of words so easy and graceful, a style so

* Letter in Nichols, vol. iii. pp. 449, 450.

† Parallel between Essex and Buckingham.

harmonious, a series of antitheses so spirited without affectation, an absence of quaintness, pedantry, and vulgarity, so truly gentlemanlike, and so truly worthy of the most brilliant man of his age. . . . It is the language of a soldier's heart, with the unstudied grace of a noble writer.*

If the human face is, in the majority of cases, that index of character we believe it to be, then that of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, as handed down to us in the portrait still in existence, fully bears out the meagre details of history; for history at best reflects but dimly the great light of the once actual. The upper lip and nose express the presence of an easily-moved will—that is to say, there is weakness. All else is wonderfully fine. The brow for intellect, the eyes for truth, are perfect in their expression. No wonder that his heart was worn upon his sleeve in his disdain of an injustice or a lie; no wonder that he wrote a noble style; no wonder that he was eminently religious in the best sense of the expression; no wonder that he was for securing to every man a toleration of his peculiar creed, so long as it did not infringe upon justice and the liberty of others. No wonder that the Puritans loved him, and gathered round him as their chief—he had a wider range of thought, a higher sense of truth, than they as a majority; but what mattered this? One of the characteristics of genuine truth is its easy reception of intermediate and lesser truths. In a word, Essex, like Shakespeare, was actuated by the principle—if he did not mentally perceive it to be one—which in its discovery and application to science has immortalized our own age. It was that of a connecting link, a sublime under-current of unity, which, whatever was the superficies of creed and dogma, still connected man with the Supreme. Such, in fact, is the fundamental principle of toleration, whether perceived or not, and one which makes us think, quoting the fine words of Sir James Stephens, “that in the judgment of an enlightened charity, many Christian societies, who are accustomed to denounce each other's errors, will, at length, come to be regarded as members in common of the one great and comprehensive Church, in which diversities of forms are harmonized by an all-pervading harmony of spirit.”

The three most memorable events connected with the Tower in the reign of James I., were the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, the long imprisonment of Sir Walter Raleigh, which was lightened of some of its weariness by the thoughtful tenderness and generosity of Lady Apsley, mother of Lucy Hutchinson, and by matters connected with the Gunpowder Plot. In the governor's house still exists the room in which the conspirators were examined. It has been unfortunately turned into a bed-room of very modern aspect; but a portion of the papered canvas is left to open doorwise, so that the rugged walls and the inscriptions cut in the stone to commemorate the event, can still be seen.

* *Literary Hist. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 370.

And now came on a time in the history of the Tower of London, as memorable, if not so eminently tragic, as any foregone ; and as respected the nation and the immortal rights of its people, greater than any yet known. For, hitherto, something more or less personal had connected the illustrious imprisoned with those contingencies for which they had suffered and died ; now arose a man whose sublime patriotism was alone matched by the greatness of the liberties he sought to resuscitate from oblivion and disuse, thereby to strengthen the hands of the people against a despotism such as England had never known. This man was Sir John Eliot !

We have sought in vain to localize his connexion with the Tower of London. An affectionate interest, begot by the selfsame patriotism which, in its sublimest degree, this great Englishman's life and labours illustrated, made us desire to fix upon the actual spot where his sufferings were endured and finally consummated : so that English men and women might henceforth say, ' here this noble spirit suffered for our sakes ; here, by a lofty endurance of such sufferings as besotted tyranny would inflict, the liberties we enjoy were in a large measure strengthened and confirmed ; here the ' Monarchie of Man ' was written—that work in which religion, truth, and ' the wisdom of the ancients,' are so finely blended ; and here, yes ! on this spot, that long and lingering death found its close—a death, compared to that of the momentary pangs of the block and axe, was as many deaths comprised in one ! ' We exceedingly regret this. In ordinary cases such a point would be scarcely worth consideration ; but it sometimes happens in history, as in actual life, that minutiae performs a service distinctly its own ; and that the " hallowed spot " consecrated by a peculiar and a sublime greatness in the cause of truth, serves in retrospect a double purpose ; that of abstract repayment through the reverence of memory ; and that of inspiring an ardent belief in the ultimate fruition of all truly virtuous and unselfish acts : a belief which we think constitutes in a great measure the religion of patriotism.

To attempt to fix upon this locality, where all is doubt, would be useless. Eliot's letters, like those of Selden, are simply dated " y^e Tower of London ; " this quaint title gives us therefore no clue. Rooms in the " lieutenant's house " were often used for the more important state-prisoners ; and commitments had been so numerous through the reign of James and up to the date of Eliot's imprisonment, that, probably, other than the ordinary dungeons were brought into use, and parts of the old palace, or " Royal Apartments," made to serve the jailors' necessities. This old place was extensive ; for it occupied the whole south-east corner of the inner ballium, and, though in a dilapidated state as early as the reign of Elizabeth, it was still so far habitable as to have some of its rooms used for state-purposes at the coronation of Charles II. Its site is occupied by the Ordnance Office ; though little is known of its form and extent beyond what is preserved to us by the old survey, as most of it was taken down in the reign of James II.

The close of his reign found, in contradistinction to a vast amount of existing civil and religious tyranny, a deep and lasting love of freedom spread abroad among the people. Little yet had been secured in parliament to assert their rights; but, on all sides, saving on that of the high-church party, an earnest spirit was aroused, and the struggle for constitutional freedom to be clearly foreseen. Sir John Eliot first sat in the parliament of 1623. The great measure of this was the abolition of monopolies for the sale of merchandize and for using any trade, the bill of which was ably drawn up by Eliot, assisted by Coke and Philips. This parliament was dissolved in October, 1624, and was closely followed by the death of King James. The contest that was sure to follow, was soon begun, and the parliament "assembled at the summons of the new monarch immediately after his accession, were more than ever proudly watchful of privilege, and more than ever sternly resolved on good government."* They were met almost at once by a menace from the king. The first efforts of the parliament to secure an enlargement of popular representation, the limitation of their vote of tonnage and poundage to one year, and their attack, though as yet indirect, on Buckingham, led the king to threaten a dissolution, "and make as good a shift for his present occasions as he could." This threat exerted no influence on these great and determined men. They were ready to grant supplies on the condition of a redress of grievances, but added, "that if the state of things would not admit a redress of grievances there was not so much necessity of money."† The result was an abrupt dissolution. From this time the beginning of the question at issue between the king and the memorable parliament of 1640 may be dated. "Nothing could be more evident by the experience of the late reign, as well as by observing the state of public spirit, than that hasty and premature dissolutions or prorogations of parliament served but to aggravate the crown's embarrassments. Every successive House of Commons inherited the feeling of its predecessor, without which it would have ill represented the prevalent humour of the nation. The same men for the most part came again to parliament more irritated and desperate of reconciliation with the sovereign than before. Even the politic measure, as it was fancied to be, of excluding some of the most active members from seats in the new assembly, by nominating them sheriffs for the year, failed altogether of the expected success, as it must be in an age when all ranks partook in a common enthusiasm."‡

The prosecution against Buckingham was renewed still more fiercely and openly in the next parliament. Deprived, through the machinations of Buckingham, of his former seat, Sir John Eliot was only the more enthusiastically returned by the electors of his native county of Cornwall. For, seeing the danger to which his needful conduct in the coming parliament must expose him, he sought with quiet and affecting

* Forster's Life of Eliot, p. 27.

† Rushworth, vol. i. p. 190.

‡ Hallam's Com. Hist. vol. i. p. 376.

calmness to prevent the evil falling on his children. "He assigned over every portion of his most extensive estates in trust to relatives, for the benefit of his family. Having done this, he repaired to his place in the House of Commons, resolved, at whatever hazard, to strike down the great traitor who had imperilled the liberty and property of the kingdom." *

The rage of the king was without measure when he found that the "defeats and disgraces of the nation" were traced home to Buckingham; he resorted to his usual habit of insolence and threats, but both were unregarded. Buckingham was impeached on twelve articles. It was on this occasion that Eliot made one of his memorable speeches; that containing the well-known allusion to Sejanus. In power, in beauty, in vehement and irresistible eloquence, it has never been exceeded. It was exactly a fitting speech for "the most illustrious confessor in the cause of liberty whom that time produced." It formed, as Mr. Forster well says, "an important chapter in his history."

After alluding to Buckingham's ambition, the national miseries and misfortunes suffered through him, his deceitfulness of character, his high oppression, so that both laws and men "must stoop to him;" to his bribery and corruption in the sale of honour and offices of command, so that "that which was wont to be the crown of virtue and merit, is now become a merchandize for the greatness of this man, and justice itself made a prey unto him;"—after contriving that "all the most deserving offices that require abilities to discharge them are fixed upon the Duke, his allies, and kindred;" "that he hath drawn to him and his the power of justice, the power of honour, and the power of command, both for peace and war, to strengthen his allies, and, in setting up himself, hath set upon the kingdom's revenues, the fountain of supply, and the nerves of the land,"—he thus magnificently concluded:—

"Your lordships have an idea of the man, what he is in himself, what in his affections! You have seen his power, and some, I fear, have felt it! You have known his practice, and have heard its effects. It rests, then, to be considered what, being such as he is in reference to the king and state, how compatible or incompatible with either. In reference to the king, he must be styled the canker in his treasure; in reference to the state, the moth of all goodness. What future hopes are to be expected, your lordships may draw out of his actions and affections. I will now see, by comparison with others, to what we may find him likened. I can hardly find him a match or parallel in all precedents; none so like him as Sejanus, who is thus described by Tacitus:—*Audax sui obtegens, in alios criminator juxta adulator et superbus*. My lords, for his pride and flattery, it was noted of Sejanus, that he did *clientes suos provinciis adornare*. Doth not this man the like? Ask England, Scotland,

* Harl. MSS. No. 7000. Forster's Life, p. 88.

and Ireland, and they will tell you! Sejanus's pride was so excessive, as Tacitus saith, he neglected all counsel, mixed his business and service with the prince, seemed to confound their actions, and was often styled *imperatoris laborum socius*. How lately and how often hath this man commixed his actions in discourse with actions of the king! My lords, I have done. You see the MAN. This should be boldly spoken. By him came all these evils, in him we find the cause, on him we expect the remedies, and to this we met your lordships in conference; nor can we doubt that, in your lordships' wisdom, we shall in due time find justice as he deserves."*

This speech enraged the king to an unseemly extent, and the allusion to Sejanus strongly moved him. "He must intend me for Tiberius!" he exclaimed.

Eliot was at once committed to the Tower, but released at the end of eight days; the Commons having been deeply moved, and refusing to proceed till "righted in their liberties." After a further struggle, in which Eliot took a prominent part, infusing, as it were, his noble spirit into the hearts of other men, the parliament was again dissolved.

The "new counsels" the king had threatened appeared now in the shape of a naked despotism. Everything short of the absolute surrender of the subject to the muskets of the soldiery was resorted to.† "Subsidies were levied, enormous penalties exacted from religious recusants, the pulpits were made use of from which to preach the new doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, to prove that the absolute submission of subjects to the royal will and pleasure was the doctrine of Holy Scripture;‡ those who spoke against, or decried these doctrines, were at once censured in the Court of High Commission, suspended or imprisoned, and their books suppressed;§ and, lastly, after a levy, that ushered in, as it were, the great coming question of ship-money, commissioners were sent throughout the country, armed with all the powers of an iniquitous despotism, to raise a loan, or, in Hallam's words, "to force upon the people an arbitrary tax, of which the name of loan was scarcely a disguise."

Sir John Eliot was amongst those who refused to contribute to this loan. He was arrested in Cornwall, brought to London, and, after an examination before the council, on which occasion he exhibited the same fearless sense of right and duty, he was thrown into the Gatehouse; Hampden and four others, in the meanwhile, being committed to the Fleet. Eliot's petition from the Gatehouse—a precious document—is still preserved in the British Museum.|| It is his own, both in style and handwriting. The failure of an expedition for the relief of Rochelle, and the

* Rushworth, vol. i. p. 355. Forster's Life, p. 44.

§ Brook's Religious Liberty, vol. i. p. 432.

† Forster, p. 49. ‡ Neal, vol. i. p. 151.

|| Sloane's MSS. 2531.

financial difficulties which ensued, necessitated the calling of a new parliament. The objectors to the loan were released, and Eliot, as were the others who had been so imprisoned, was triumphantly returned.

This parliament sat on the 17th of March, 1628. Though addressed by the king in a tone of insolent menace, "wonderful was the temper and decorum with which the great leaders of that powerful house listened to this pitiful display. The imagination rises in the contemplation of the profound statesmanship which distinguished every movement of these men, and it is difficult to describe it in terms of appropriate praise." * Subsidies were at once grasped at, but steadily refused till securities were given for the rights of the subject. Eliot led the house with a consummate power, which reacting, tripled, as it were, his likeness in other men. The immortal Petition of Rights was framed, "that noble legacy of a slandered parliament," as Hallam finely says, and passed, after the usual amount of double-dealing and intended equivocation by the king, and the abandonment of a weak but perfidious amendment by the lords.

It was on this occasion, between the first jesuitical assent of Charles to the Petition of Rights, and the final one wrung from him by terror, that Eliot's genius and unconquerable patriotism reached their highest point of dignity. After the first assent, when it seemed that every right of the people sank hopelessly back from its contest with despotism, "the genius of Eliot rose to the grandeur of that occasion, and by its wonderful command over every meaner passion, by its great disregard of every personal danger, seems to embody a perfect union of profound sagacity and fearless magnanimity unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in the history of the most illustrious statesmen." † Rising up, when the king's answer to the Petition of Rights did not satisfy the Commons, he made a speech, in again tracing the origin of the grievances of the country, that seems to us to surpass in fervid eloquence the more celebrated one containing the allusion to Sejanus. After commenting on the dangers and evils of the nation, the perils to religion, the failures abroad in respect to expeditions, the disunion of political relations, he thus proceeds:—"For the rest, the ignorance and corruption of our ministers, where can you miss of instances? If you survey the court, if you survey the country, if the Church, if the city be examined, if you observe the bar, if the bench, if the ports, if the shipping, if the land, if the seas, all these will render you variety of proofs, and that in such measure and proportion, as shows the greatness of our disease to be such, that if there be not some speedy application for remedy our case is almost desperate. . . . In that which concerns the impoverishing of the king, no other arguments will I use than such as all men grant. The exchequer you know is empty, and the reputation thereof gone ;

* Forster, p. 57.

† *Ibid.* p. 68.

the ancient lands are sold, the jewels pawned, the plate engaged, the debts still great ; almost all charges, both ordinary and extraordinary, borne up by projects ; what poverty can be greater, what necessity so great ? What perfect English heart is not almost dissolved into sorrow for this truth ? For the oppression of the subject, it needs no demonstration ; the whole kingdom is a proof ; and for the exhausting of our treasures the very oppression speaks it. What waste of our provisions, what corruptions of our ships, what destruction of our men have been, witness that journey to Algiers, witness that with Mansfield, witness that to Cadiz, witness the next, witness that to Rhée, witness the last. (I pray God we may never have more such witnesses). Witness likewise the Palatinate, witness Denmark, witness the Turks, witness the Dunkirkers. Witness all ! What losses we have sustained ! how we are impaired in munitions, in ships, in men ! It is beyond contradiction, that we were never so much weakened, nor ever had less hope how to be restored. These, Mr. Speaker, are our dangers ; these are they which do threaten us ; and these are like the Trojan horse, brought in cunningly to surprise us : in these do lurk the strongest of our enemies, ready to issue on us ; and if we do not speedily expel them, these are the signs, these are the invitations to others ; these will so prepare *their* entrance, that we shall have no means left of refuge or defence ; for if we have these enemies at home, how can we strive with those abroad ? If we be free from these no other can impeach us ! Our ancient English virtue, like the old Spartan valour, cleared from these disorders—our being in sincerity of religion, and once made friends with heaven ; having maturity of councils, sufficiency of generals, incorruption of officers, opulency in the king, liberty in the people, repletion in treasure, plenty of provisions, reparation of ships, preservation of men : our ancient English nation, I say, thus rectified, will secure us ; and unless there be a speedy reformation in these I know not what hopes or expectations we can have. These are the things, Sir, I shall desire to have taken into consideration, that as we are the great council of the kingdom, and have the apprehension of these dangers, we may truly represent them unto the king ; whereto I conceive we are bound by a treble obligation, of duty to God, of duty to his Majesty, and of duty to our country.”* The result of this great speech was the formation of a committee touching the danger of the kingdom, and the final assent to the bill.

The scene whilst Eliot delivered this speech, as on the following day, is described as extraordinary. Many wept—Coke, Philips, Prynne—“yea, the speaker in his speech could not refrain from weeping and shedding of tears, besides a great many whose great griefs made them dumb and silent.” The mighty liberties of England, thus “struggled in their birth with tears.”†

* Parl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 383.

† Rushworth, vol. i. p. 509.

Abundant supplies were granted, and the king hastened to close the session. This he did in a speech that showed what motives and purposes of treachery lurked behind. New oppressions and miseries might be foreseen; but the people's hearts were strengthened by this immortal session, and though Charles "trode back so immediately his late footsteps, and dissipated what little hopes might have arisen from his tardy assent to the Petition of Rights," it was "launched upon the great ocean of the popular mind, and was irrevocable."

The apostasy of Wentworth, the assassination of Buckingham, and the elevation of Laud to the see of London, were the chief events between the prorogation and meeting of parliament, on the 20th of January, 1629.

The question which Eliot undertook in the commencement of this session, was that of religion. Enormous were the encroachments and the grievances arising from irresponsible power. For Arminianism had now passed from the condition of mere opinion, and connecting itself with absolute despotism, was made an effective instrument of enforcing and promulgating its worst features. To be Calvinistic, or have a leaning to those doctrines professed by the Church of England for seventy years, was now as fatal as to be a separatist; and though little can be said for the tolerative views of the moderate Church party, these now ranged themselves with the more distinctive Puritans, for the furtherance of those liberties the king and his venal clergy, such as Mainwaring, Laud, and Sibthorpe, had combined to trample under foot; a combination whose chief object was to give the king, as head of the Church, a power like that of the pope over the rights, ceremonies, and faith of the people.

From his speech and the vote of the house, it is evident that Eliot's opinions coincided with those of the majority. Though at the same time that it was necessary that a distinct vote should be made against the disguised Popery of Laud, and there was reference to the Articles of Religion passed in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, it is clear, from Eliot's speech, what his opinions were, as he distinctly affirmed, that it "was not in parliament to make a new religion," and that "God forbid that men should be made to judge of that truth."* This was worthy of a more perfect religious liberty than any yet attained.

The question of religion gave place to the renewal of the subject of tonnage and poundage, and with the documents relating to this, Sir John Eliot entered the House of Commons on the morning of the 2d of March, 1629, *for the last time*.†

One of the most extraordinary scenes recorded in English history followed. The speaker and clerk refusing to read Sir John Eliot's motion, he read it himself. Again the speaker refused to put the question, and the result was extraordinary. The speaker was forced back in his chair, reprimanded by Selden, and denounced by his

* Parl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 451.

† Forster, p. 97.

kinsman. The paper was read by another, put to the house, and carried by tremendous acclamations. Whilst this was proceeding, a message from the king commanded the sergeant to bring away his mace. The house not only prevented his going, but deprived him of the key of the door, which was locked. Upon this, the usher of the black rod knocked at the door, in the king's name, and was refused entrance. Charles, in a transport of rage, sent for the guard to force open the door; but the Commons, in the meanwhile, had voted their protest, the doors were thrown open, and the members walked out in a body.

The house was immediately prorogued; the king, in his speech—which he took care to have printed and dispersed, as a sort of proclamation—calling the patriot members "*rippers*." Eliot and others were immediately summoned before the council. Here he nobly vindicated his conduct, asserting that it was not for him now, as a private man, to vindicate acts that were done as a public man.

During some months' confinement, probably in the King's Bench, the severity of Eliot's imprisonment was increased when it was found that he would not confess that he was sorry he had offended. The judgment finally given against him was, that he should be imprisoned during the king's pleasure, should not be released without giving surety for good behaviour, nor without making submission, and as the greatest offender and *ringleader*, be fined 2,000*l*.

Of what followed, we have this curious passage in a contemporary letter. "Sir John Eliot was not yet sent prisoner to the Tower, though he had sent to the Lieutenant to provide him with a convenient lodging, that he might send his upholsterers to trim it up. Concerning his fine, my author heard him say that he had one cloak, two suits, two pair of boots and gallashees, and a few books, and that was all his private substance, and if they could pick 2,000*l* out of that, much good might it do them. Besides, he said, when he was first close prisoner in the Tower, a commission was directed to the high sheriff of Cornwall, and five other commissioners—his capital enemies—to inquire into his lands and goods, and to seize upon them for the king, and they returned a *nihil*."* He had thus, as we have already seen, with an acute foresight of the tyranny which would be exercised against him, settled his estate in trust for his children, and thus, at least, extortion was defeated. A year had now elapsed between his arrest and final committal to the Tower. This must have taken place on the 27th or 28th of March, 1630. Nothing but a "dark and smoky room was provided," and this was changed so often as to make him write to Sir Oliver Luke on the 25th of January, 1631. "My manie troubles of removing have for a while hindered me from writing to you. The lodging which I had upon my first removal before Christmas being again altered, soe I may saie of my lodgings in the Tower, as Jacob

* Mead to Stuteville, Feb. 20, 1629, 30. Sloane's MSS. 4178.

for his wages—‘ Now ten times have they chaunged it,’ but I thank God, not once has it caused an alteration of my mind, soe infinite is that mercie which has hitherto protected mee, and I doubt not I shall find it with mee.”*



SIR JOHN ELIOT WRITING IN PRISON.

From the first his health sank. The Tower can at no time have been a very healthy place of residence, and at that date, crowded as it was with victims of state-policy, its atmosphere poisoned by the fetid exhalations of the surrounding ditch, then in a most filthy condition,† and the ague-giving fogs of the undrained marshes,

* Appendix to D'Israeli's Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 507.

† Maitland's London, Edit. 1739.

stretching to the east and south, it must have been the worst place in the world for a man of delicate and consumptive habit. The plague, too, was abroad in London during nearly the whole time of his imprisonment, as we find from Mead's and Pory's news-letters. At first he seems to have had a "fellow-commoner," who with him had "the liberty of the house;"* how long this arrangement continued we do not find. For, till towards the last, when the rigours of his imprisonment were so largely increased, and "hardly his son" permitted to see him, his attorney and friends were occasionally admitted. Even Valentine, his fellow-patriot, visited him from the Gate-house prison, and another from his lodgings in Fleet Street, where he was confined in the nominal custody of a constable; so lax was their punishment compared to that of the "*great ringleader*."

Yet through this wearisome imprisonment, this lengthened, finely drawn-out death, he employed his time as befitted an illustrious assertor of right. Shut out by hate and tyrannous fear from one class of government, he sought it under a higher formula still—that of man's true government of himself. A sublime idea! For it was vantage ground on which no earthly king might enter; and yet it was the same abstractedly in kind: for human rights in their highest degree, or greatest purity, are necessarily but laws of the human mind made manifest through action. For man's true "monarchy" over himself can but have one result—that of practically solving the highest rights of civil and of religious liberty. Rights—be it recollected—nobly circumscribed by order and by law.

This great work of Eliot's imprisonment was, as is well known, a philosophic treatise—"THE MONARCHIE OF MAN," still preserved amongst the Harleian manuscripts in the British Museum, and, for the larger part, first given to the world in the appendix to Mr. Forster's "Life of Sir John Eliot"—a masterpiece of English prose, as worthy of the subject as it is amongst the finest products of a great literary age. We find in this work of Eliot's—from which we greatly regret our limits forbid us to quote—proofs of how remote the first assertors of constitutional rights were from entertaining any ideas relative to an overthrow of monarchy; thus showing what the king's infatuation must have been, and what the sufferings of the people, thus to beget a commonwealth, as was done, in a nation so attached to its ancient method of government. But despotism and bigotry are blind, and always will be.

This treatise occupied the illustrious patriot till the year of his death. From the time of its completion his disease rapidly increased. This was consumption, brought on by the cold and damp of his dungeon. "Cold," he says, in one of his last letters to Hampden, "at first was the occasion of my sickness; heat and tenderness, by close keeping in my chamber, has sore increast my weakness." To shut out even the hope

* Harl. MSS. 390.

of recovery, the severities of his prison were increased, on pretence that it was made the free resort of visitors for purposes of his own ; and there is little doubt but what the lieutenant, one of a class at that date almost always the venal instruments of the crown, lent no unwilling hand to this execution of royal vengeance. "My lodgings," he writes to Hampden, "are now removed, and *I am now where candle-light may be suffered, but scarce fire*. I hope you will think that this exchange of places makes not a change of mind. The same protection is still with me, and the same confidence ; and these things can have end by them that gives them being. None but my servants, hardly my son, may have admittance to me. My friends I must desire for their sakes to forbear coming to the Tower."

His friends had already made an effort to save him. They appealed to the judges of the King's Bench, but the Lord Chief Justice Richardson refused to accede to the motion, on the plea that, "though Sir John was brought low in body, yet he was as lofty and high in mind as ever," and advised him to petition the king. At length, as death approached, his anxious friends induced him to do so. We have this account of the petition and its results in one of Pory's letters to Sir Thomas Pickering:—"Sir John Elliott's late manner of proceeding was this: he first presented a petition to his Ma^{ty} by the hand of the Lieutenant, his keeper, to this effect:—'Sir, your judges have committed me to prison here in y^e Tower of London, where, by reason of the quality of the ayre, I am fallen into a dangerous disease. I humbly beseech your Ma^{ty} you will command your judges to sett me at liberty, that for recovery of my health I may take some fresh ayre, &c.' Whereunto his Majesty's answer was, it was not humble enough. Then Sir John sent another petition by his own sonne to the effect following:—'Sir, I am heartily sorry I have displeased your Majesty, and having so said doe humbly beseech you once againe to comānd your judges to sett me at liberty, that when I have recovered my health I may returne back to my prison, there to undergoe such punishment as God hath allotted unto mee.' Upon this the Lieutenant came and expostulated with him, saying it was proper to him and common to none else to doe that office of delivering petitions for his prisoners. And if Sir John, in a third petition, would humble himself to his Majesty in acknowledging his fault and craving pardon, he would willingly deliver it, and made no doubt that he should obtain his liberty. Unto this Sir John's answer was, 'Thank you (Sir) for your friendly advice, but my spirits are grown feeble and faint, which when it shall please God to restore unto their former vigour, I will take it further into my consideration.'"

We think if ever patriotism were put to proof, it was on this occasion ; and the man who would not thus quail before tyranny—who would not betray the great public cause, or the prescriptive rights of his countrymen, by acknowledging error where truth, and truth only, existed, and this though encompassed by the shadows

of a lingering death, rises up before us to a strength of moral grandeur absolutely sublime. Well might it be said that the men, of whom Eliot was the chief, were no less heroes than those of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

Sir John Eliot survived two months this climax of a Stuart's hate. In one of Pory's news-letters, under date of November 15th, 1632, we have this notice :—"The same night, having met with Sir John Elyott's attorney in Paul's Churchyard, hee told me he had been with Sir John in the Tower, and found him so far spent with his consumption as not like to live a week longer."* He died on the 27th of November, 1632, "and his sonne petitioned his Ma^{ty} once more, he would be pleased to permitt his body to be carried into Cornwall to be buried. Whereto was answered at the foot of the petition, 'Lett Sir John's body be buried in the church of that parish in which he dyed.'" This answer was quite in keeping with what had gone before :—"The cowardly and malign fear which had thought to crush the national liberties by crushing their master-spirit, would not do otherwise than wreak on senseless dust the hatred begot by the significant failure of its attempt to subjugate the lofty soul which had once consecrated it!" Eliot was buried in an "obscure corner" of the Chapel ad Vincula; but his ashes, in our esteem, lie greatest amongst those there enshrined. There *is* comparison, even though noble deeds be taken at their height; and the little "obscure corner" where despotism played out the last weak act of its immeasurable meanness, has but two likenesses in "hallowed spots"—the Grave of Milton and the Field of Chalgrave.

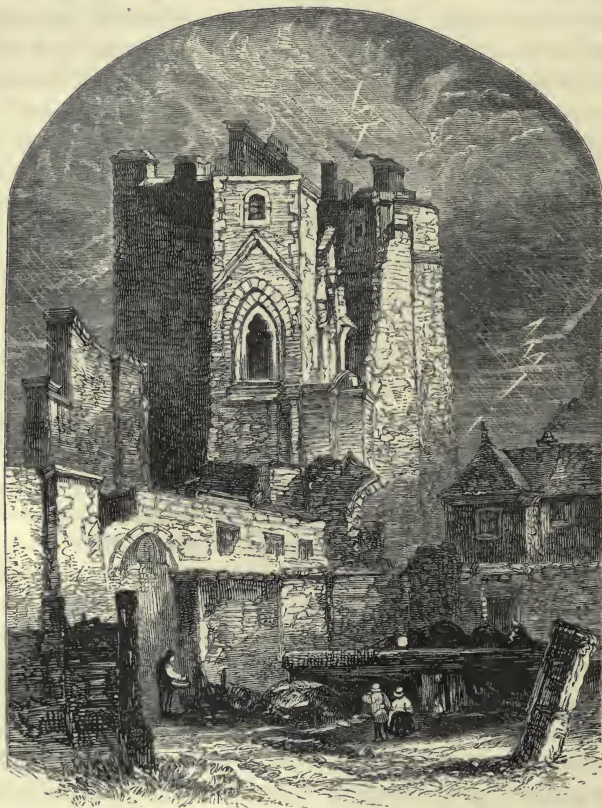
Shortly before his death Eliot sent for a painter to the Tower to have his portrait taken, as he then appeared, shrunk and ghastly with disease, so as for it to remain as a perpetual memorial of his "hatred of tyranny." But any incitation to preservation of his memory was needless. "His name was one of the watchwords of the great after struggle, and it had none more glorious."†

As to what has been said by various party writers in relation to the warmth and determination of this "illustrious parliament," neither was more than the right and duty of men standing forth in defence of constitutional privileges. So far from making encroachment, they seemed not to have perceived that other securities were needful before they could even ensure the few positive rights so long their inheritance. No one seems to have perceived, not even Eliot, that till a tribunal like the star-chamber was abolished, there could be little hope for the practical working of even rights presumed to be secured; or, that till a periodical meeting of parliament should be placed as a right beyond the control of arbitrary will, there was no security for either civil or religious freedom. This truth had yet to be learned. Politics, no more than other principles and duties, escape the slowly-operating law of evolution;

* Harl. MSS. 7000.

† Forster, p. 124.

and "twelve years more of repeated aggression, taught the Long Parliament what a few sagacious men might have already suspected, that they must recover more of their ancient constitution from oblivion, that they must sustain its partial weakness by new securities, that in order to render the existence of monarchy compatible with



THE SALT TOWER.

that of freedom, they must not only strip it of all it had usurped, but of something that was its own."

That Eliot's treatment in the Tower was a matter of notoriety, is evinced by the order of the Long Parliament to examine "after what manner Sir John Eliot came

to his death, his usage in the Tower, to name the rooms and places where he was imprisoned, and where he died, and to report the same to the House.”* Whether this committee sat we have been unable to learn. But with respect to the legality of his, and the other patriot’s imprisonment, the reversal of judgment finally led, in 1667, to a most important result; that of placing beyond controversy the great privilege of unlimited speech in parliament.

The base asserters of royal and religious prerogative became themselves the next most noted inmates of the Tower. We shall have other occasion to speak of them, as well as of the imprisonment of Vane. A great time had then arrived, and has many points of illustration.

Of the Tower itself there is little more to say. After the revolution of 1688, the number of committals gradually declined, till the advanced civilization and recognised rights of our own time render state-persecution a thing unknown. Nor have we any belief that such times can return again; for any sort of despotism, whether religious or political, is incompatible with the growth of knowledge. The Tower of London is now no other than a state arsenal, and a magnificent monument, in its empty dungeons, of the recognition of human freedom!

Of the towers on the eastern ballium we have made little mention; but they were, at various epochs, made use of as prisons. Some of them are not now in existence, though the Salt Tower yet remains in an excellent state of preservation, as also its curious inscriptions. The celebrated Lanthorn Tower abutting on the old palace was, after being partly destroyed by fire, pulled down in 1788.

The Bloody Tower has been already referred to, as connected with the noble gateway into the inner ballium, and beneath which *all* the illustrious persons connected with the Tower passed and repassed on their “narrow way.” This is a “hallowed spot,” on which no indefiniteness *can* linger, no differing chronicles affect, no varying tradition ignore its mournful sanctity. Each end of this passage was originally secured by a gate and portcullis. Those of the northern extremity have been long since displaced, but those of the southern end still remain in fine preservation. A little stone staircase in the eastern side, formerly led to the chambers above; these are now approached by an entrance near the governor’s house. Tradition, which there is little reason to doubt, states, that in one of these chambers the young princes Edward V. and the Duke of York were murdered. It is hallowed by being the room in which Colonel Hutchinson was imprisoned after the Restoration. Here “he was kept close prisoner, and had no air allowed him, but a pair of leads over his chamber, which were so high and cold he had no benefit by them; and every night he had three doors shut upon him, and a sentinel at the outmost.”† The tower adjoining the

* State Trials, vol. iii. p. 314.

† Life of Colonel Hutchinson, p. 128.

Bloody Tower, formerly called the Hall Tower, sometimes the Wakefield Tower, and now the Record Tower, or Office, is in its lower part of vast antiquity. With the exception of the Keep or White Tower, it is the oldest part of the fortress now in existence, being coeval with the age of Rufus; whilst the remains of a wall, extending from it in a northerly direction, form a portion of the defences erected by the Conqueror. The upper floor, forming an octagonal apartment, about twenty-eight feet in diameter, was erected somewhere at the end of the twelfth century. As early as the reign of Henry VIII., it was known as the "Toure of the Kyng's Records," and is supposed to have been so appropriated at a much earlier date. In the reign of Edward I., a portion of the records were preserved in the "Toure of London," upon their removal from the Temple. It is a fine lofty chamber, and till recently, when all these valuable public documents were removed to the new Record Office in Chancery Lane, its presses were filled with the more precious of the records; the rest occupying at the same date, the vast chambers in the White Tower. The oldest of these are known as the *Cartæ Antiquæ*, being forty-one uncut rolls of grants and charters made to ecclesiastics, from the time of the Confessor, to the end of the thirteenth century. There are also rolls of Chancery, from the first of John, to the death of Edward IV.; these alone are 2,200 in number, besides a vast collection of other records of no intrinsic value. The whole form a collection of the highest national and individual importance; for they are the groundwork of the constitution, the basis of the laws, and the source without the aid of which no story of the nation can be written or proved.*

And here—in this chamber—sacred be the spot! amidst these ancient rolls, once sat Selden, "chief of learned men reputed in this land." † Here it was he sought for those great precedents, which were the life-blood of the national liberties; and thus, conjointly with Sir Robert Cotton, armed the patriots with those invincible truths set down in the second Charter—the Petition of Rights. Here it was that Prynne, mutilated and cropped, passed his time in peace after the Restoration, in arranging the records, and compiling materials for his learned, numberless, yet forgotten books. Here, too, since then no unapt successors toiled, gathering what Bacon beautifully calls, "fragments from the great shipwrecks of time." Amongst others, Lysons and Bayley, whose portraits, with those of Selden and Prynne, used to hang above the dusky fire-place. Nor at the present hour, and in a newer place, are these public documents of our kingdom in less learned or less courteous keeping. To this the press is witness—this the higher degrees of literature show. Whilst this "fourth estate" combined keeps its high educative tone, yielding neither to bigotry on the one hand, nor to vulgar ignorance on the other, it will remain the power it is; a power which

Eliot would have gloried in, which Milton, as a prophet, saw, which Hampden would have revered.

We wind down the ancient, rugged stairs which Selden trod, we come forth into the air and sunshine, we believe, with Milton, that "darkness leads on to light;" we believe that civil and religious liberty—the latter in its widest sense—are but other terms for human good and human progress, founded on our clearer and clearer knowledge of everlasting law. So thus we leave, in hope and faith, the shadows of the Tower of London.

CHAPTER IV.

YORK HOUSE, STRAND, AND GRAY'S INN.—THE PHILOSOPHY OF FRUIT.

OUR view of civil and religious liberty would be indeed narrow were we to confine it solely to a statement of mere facts and obvious effects. Such lie upon the surface, and are more easily observed as well as understood; but the causes themselves have a wider range, and an alliance with principles and things apparently the most remote. For, if a wise and rational liberty—the liberty if we may so express it of law—be, as we believe it to be, synonymous with the gradual development of the highest human good, then must such effects proceed from causes embracing the widest and most diversified generality. It is this idea which makes us give a place to Francis Bacon in these pages. The relation of his philosophy to human liberty has, as yet, been rather abstract than immediate and direct; still, for this reason, is it the more sublime and vital; it is a liberty whose fruits centuries shall ripen and increase—but not consume.

In winter time “when fields were dank and ways were mire,” when the great rookery of Durham-house, and the elms in Covent Garden were leafless, he was born at York-house in the Strand, the 22nd of January, 1561. The old maps show the place of his birth far better than his modern biographers, who willingly please their readers with the fable, that parts of the old house are yet existing. This is not the case. In Aggas’s plan we see the old house as it stood *near* the Thames, surrounded by a courtyard, and gardens; and separated from the Strand at a point close upon Charing Cross by a single line of mean houses, used probably as in the case of Arundel-house as stables, sheds, and servants’ lodgings. The old map is borne out by a passage in Rawley’s Life of Bacon, that he was born in “York Place or Palace,”—“*infra plateam dictam le Strand* ;” * that is below or back from it. The house was so called from having been originally the “London lodgings,” of the Archbishops of York; but after the Reformation it was either let or granted by the crown to the Lord Keepers of the Great Seal during the time they held office. It was in connexion with this dignity that it was occupied by Sir Nicholas Bacon, at the date of his son’s birth, and probably through the two previous years, as the Great Seal had been delivered to him on the 22nd of March, 1558.

* Opuscula varia Posthuma et Vita, p. 1.

At this period the Strand had lost much of its ancient appearance. It was now bordered by houses on either side ; though the conspicuous rookery of Durham House, the trees around the Savoy and Somerset Place, and the large gardens which ran behind the single line of houses separating the Strand from that "inclosure or pasture commonly called Covent Garden,"* must have still retained to it a degree of its olden rusticity. This inclosure, anciently the garden of the Abbey of Westminster, was, about 1570, leased in portion from the Earl of Bedford by Sir William Cecil—the great Lord Burleigh, who, building himself a house at the "south end of Drury



OLD ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH.

Lane," with an orchard contiguous, or running into Covent Garden, resided here during the remainder of his life. At the point where York Place stood, the Strand, exceedingly narrowed by a block of houses at the north-east angle of St. Martin's Lane, then called "West Church Lane," opened upon the wide space of Charing, adorned by its ancient Cross. To the west and north of this were nothing but fields ; at the south-west angle lay St. James's Park, then roughly inclosed by a wall built by Henry VIII. Immediately at the rear of Charing Cross, at the north-west angle of West Church Lane, were the royal "Mewes." On the opposite side of the lane

* Copy of a lease in *Archæologia*, vol. xxx. p. 454.

stood, on the site of the present edifice, old St. Martin's Church, in which Bacon was baptized ; whilst beyond this, and its very extensive graveyard, the lane, becoming wholly rural, stretched away amidst fields to the pleasant farmhouses of St. Giles. York House itself was nobly encompassed ; east to it stood Durham House, retained by Queen Elizabeth in her own keeping during a considerable portion of Bacon's youth, and the quaint old chapel of St. Mary's, Rounceval, on the west, led from it into Scotland Yard, and thence into the " Court " or Whitehall, called " York Place " when built and inhabited by Wolsey.

No true estimate of Bacon's extraordinary genius can be made without reference to his mother. From her he undoubtedly derived the gorgeousness, the bounty and universality of his intellect, whilst its practical and strongly objective characteristics came from that statesman, who, with Cecil, guided with such consummate skill the earlier civil councils of Elizabeth's reign. As is well known, Lady Bacon was one of the most accomplished women of her age. Her father, Sir Anthony Cooke—an exquisite character—had, it is said, in imitation of Sir Thomas More, resolved to bestow a learned education on his daughters. To this end he himself became their instructor ; and during the period he held the office of tutor to the young son of Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour, the morning lessons of the youthful king were made theirs each evening. Sir Anthony was also the intimate friend and associate of the earlier English reformers, and at his instigation it probably was that Cranmer, during the first year of the young king's reign, invited to this country, amongst other foreigners, Peter Martyr, the Florentine, and Bernardo Ochino, the Tuscan, for the purpose of consulting them on a farther extension of the principles of the Reformation. Ochino remained eight years in this country, not leaving till he was forced to fly during the Marian persecution, as were also many others—foreigners, clergy and laity of distinction—including amongst the latter Sir Anthony Cooke himself.* During his residence in England, Ochino was made a prebend of Canterbury by Cranmer ; but as his religious views were far more liberal than those of the narrow-minded prelate, there is little doubt but that he was indebted for his prebendal stall, and his pension of one hundred marks per annum, to the patronage of both Cooke and Sir John Cheeke. More than one daughter of the former became perfect mistress of the Italian tongue—then an accomplishment rarer than those of Greek and Latin. Anne, the second daughter, and the future mother of Bacon, translated, whilst yet unmarried, Ochino's Twelve Sermons on Free Will, from the Tuscan. This proves intercourse as well as sympathy between Sir Anthony Cooke and the most daring reformer, who, as the disciple of the younger Socinius, was the apostle of the tenets of the great Priestley ; tenets that the statute-book was the last to erase from her list of religious delinquencies,

* Neal. vol. i. p. 77.

and which were "anathematised alike by Wittenberg, by Geneva, by Zurich, and by Rome." Performing the part of a second Roger Ascham, at Sir Anthony's seat, Giddy Hall, near Brentwood, in Essex, there it may have been that the marvellous eloquence and sweet disposition of the wonderful Tuscan moved the hearts of those around him as they had done elsewhere. Without appreciation, or at least sympathy, Sir Anthony would have neither permitted the translation, nor Lady Cooke received the dedication of her daughter's labours. Copies of this exquisite black letter little book, with its monogram A. C., more than once printed A. L., are very rare. There is one in the British Museum in the king's collection; and recollecting the influence such studies must have had over the future mental condition of Francis Bacon, and this in its mightiness over the great destinies, both physical and mental, of mankind, it cannot be looked at without interest or emotion. It had even a literary influence, if a slight but curious analogy may be trusted. "It is good," affixed the great mother to the title-page of her little book, "to hyde the kyng's secrets; but to declare and prove the works of God it is an honourable thing." Whilst the greater son says, in one of the finest passages of the preface to the "Novum Organum," and in the First Book of the "Novum Organum" itself, "That it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the glory of the king to search it out." Meaning, thereby, that the Supreme having hidden for sublimest purposes the secrets of nature, it is for man, through submission, through labour, through hope, to eliminate them, to progress by them, and thus approach Him, joyful in knowledge, strong in power, and dignified and invincible in Truth.

Towards the close of life, Lady Bacon was at issue with her sons on points chiefly religious, so much so, that Cartwright, during his imprisonment in the Fleet, acted as mediator between them; but though this difference probably limited both sympathy and social intercourse, we have affecting testimony of her son Francis's affection. In his will he desired to be buried with her, "thus spanning," Basil Montague beautifully says, "as it were, his whole life between the cradle and the grave to find nothing else therein worthy of a tribute of affection." There are also in the little preface to Ochino's Sermons, opinions, that Bacon as the great philosopher of induction must have believed in; and one small word is also made use of, pregnant with suggestion and immeasurable interest. "Soe have I taken in hande," wrote Anne Cooke to her mother, "to dedicate unto your Ladyship this smale number of Sermons for the excelēt *fruit* sake in thē contained." Think of this word FRUIT and its immortal connexion with the uprise of a true philosophy and the progress of man!

Anne Cooke must have been young when she became the second wife of Elizabeth's elderly and grave Lord Keeper. York House was from this time, without doubt, a quiet, yet influencing centre of opinion relative to a purer worship and simpler ceremonies than those established. Sir Nicholas Bacon favoured, it is well known,

the non-conforming clergy as far as his habitual caution, and Elizabeth and her bigoted bishops would permit; indeed, had he and Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, been suffered to exercise the same judgment in religious as they did in civil matters, the laws against recusants would have been less progressively atrocious, and the hatred they engendered less personal and austere. Neither can Lady Bacon be classed otherwise than the greatest amongst the Puritan women; and around her must have congregated Bedford, Huntingdon, Leicester, Warwick, Knollys, Walsingham, Sadler, Smith, and Mildmay; all of them more or less men of extraordinary intellect, and conscientiously opposed to the power exercised by the hierarchy, and the retention of such popish ceremonies in the Church as begat schism, and led the way to important changes as regarded doctrine.

Amidst influences of this kind Bacon passed his childhood. The din of religious dispute was always sounding round him; and his theological tracts prove with what effect in leading him to inquiry. Though these were not published till some years after his death, two of them were at least written, probably, in early life. That on the "Purification of the Church," contains opinions relative to baptism, the ring in marriage, the use of the surplice, and church music, which were essentially those of the Puritans, and afterwards, conjointly with doctrine, those for which they suffered all that supremacy could inflict. We are thus led to think that Robert Johnson, his father's domestic chaplain, shared with Lady Bacon the guidance of his young scholarship; for it was for these opinions, and no more, that Johnson, in 1571, was cited before Archbishop Parker, and the Bishops of Winchester and Ely, at Lambeth. On this occasion he escaped, after a short imprisonment. He was then made minister of St. Clement's—probably by Lord Burleigh, whose parish it was; but, in 1573, he was again suspended, and cast into the Gatehouse for nonconformity. From this prison he was never released, but died the next year from the effects of foul air, want, and cruelty.* At this distance of time it seems strange that powerful interest, such as Bacon and Cecil undoubtedly possessed, did not effect his release, or, at least, a mitigation of his severe imprisonment; but in far more atrocious cases than this of Johnson's, their interference was as nugatory with the bishops as distasteful to the queen.

His mother's erudition was, undoubtedly, of value in advancing his studies; for, at thirteen years of age, Francis Bacon was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. Before this, he had given many proofs of the possession of a remarkable intellect. The echo of a conduit, placed somewhere in St. James's fields, to the north of the park, amused him, whilst other children were at play; and the feats of an itinerant juggler in willing a card, led him, as early as his twelfth year, to meditate upon

* Brook's Lives of Puritans, vol. i. p. 183.

psychological action and reaction, and to foresee, as it were, though but slightly enunciated in his writings, those singular relations which seem to exist between matter and the hidden principle of vital force; the gradual elimination of which, so far as finite power may go, will mark, as appears to us, many of the ascending branches of human power and knowledge.

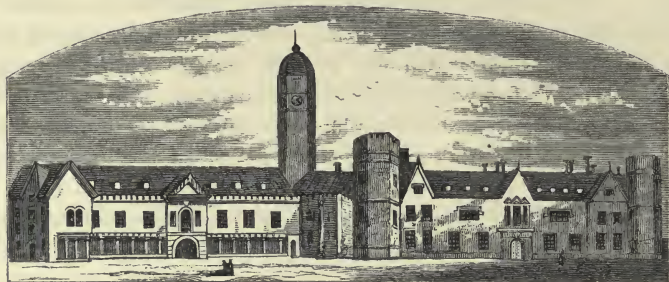
One of the influences of Bacon's childhood, in our opinion an important one, has been strangely overlooked. About the period of his birth, or shortly after, his father purchased Gorhambury, an estate in Hertfordshire, a short distance from St. Albans. Its site had been once inclosed within the massive walls of the ancient Verulamium, a Roman municipal city of great note, said to have been erected on the spot once occupied by the stronghold of Cassivellaunus, a Celtic chief; a place which, though surrounded "by woods and marshes," was not proof against the strategy of Cæsar and his legionaries. Gorhambury had belonged to the Abbey of St. Albans. It had been so named from one of its abbots, Robert de Gorham, who had built there a small country-house. This being in decay when it passed, with the estate, into the hands of Sir Nicholas Bacon, he chose a fresh site, and commenced building a new house on the first of March, 1563, which was finished the last day of September, 1568. Thus erected, it was plain and unostentatious, consisting of a quadrangle of about seventy feet square, in the centre of one side of which was the chief entrance. This led through a sort of cloister, or archway, as we see in the new front of Buckingham Palace, into the court of the quadrangle. Exactly opposite was a porch of Roman architecture; above this, engraved in grey marble, some Latin lines were to be seen, written by Sir Nicholas himself, and concluding with the words—

"Mediocria firma ;"

or, as we may say, a middle course is sure: an aphorism it had been well if his illustrious son had remembered. This porch led into the great hall of the house; from thence, at the end, a door opened into Oak Wood—in after years, one of Bacon's celebrated places of meditation. At the rear of this great quadrangle, whose sides were occupied by the chief apartments, was a second court, round which ran the library and offices. It was thus a large building, though simple and unpretending.

Queen Elizabeth paid Gorhambury several visits during her "Royal Progresses." For the occasion of the celebrated one of 1577, a gallery of lath and plaster, panelled with oak, and one hundred and twenty feet in length, was built, with two rooms attached, and a gallery beneath. The door by which the queen had entered these rooms was, after the royal departure, walled up, that no less sacred foot might cross the threshold. Such was the hollow adulation, the abnegation of man's self-respect, which nursed despotism into what it in time became. The cost of this particular visit was enormous. The steward's account for a period of scarcely four days, had

a sum total of 577*l.*, or more than 1,000*l.* of our present money—the one item of pastry alone costing 66*l.* 13*s.* 2*d.** These royal progresses were no other than a vast tax upon the nobility of this and the succeeding reign. There was no evading them; and a man's house and purse had to withstand their siege much as an Egyptian cornfield a swarm of locusts. Hospitality was a misnomer in regard to them; it was barbaric extortion on the one hand, and passive sufferance on the other. It was not the giving and receiving of a more primitive age, but a system to which “welcome,” even in name, could not belong. Through the wasteful expenditure incurred thereby, countless hearths were made desolate, fine estates brought within the gripe of usury, the pride of woodlands swept low by the axe, and old names severed from their ancient neighbourhoods—nay more, connected thenceforth with that abounding pauperism which was the disgrace and national canker of Elizabeth's reign. That Sir Nicholas Bacon suffered from these “royal visits,” there can be no doubt. At his



GORHAMBURY HOUSE.

death, in 1580, no provision existed for his youngest son; and from what we can trace of Anthony Bacon's career, it would seem that the estates he succeeded to were encumbered. He went abroad the year of his father's death, and was employed by Winwood and others in various diplomatic relations till his return in 1592. Lady Bacon, who had a life-interest in Gorhambury, resided there during the whole period of her widowhood, a space of more than twenty years, as her death does not seem to have taken place till 1601 or 1602. The hall, in the meanwhile, fell into a gradual state of ruin and decay. There could have been no funds for repairs, as, during Anthony's absence abroad—a matter of great chagrin and sorrow to his mother—she was necessitated to sell her jewels and her interest in more than one estate to supply him with funds; for his carelessness in respect to money matters was only second to that of his brother Francis.

* Nichols's Progresses, vol. ii. pp. 55–57.

These facts afford but a mournful picture of the great Puritan mother in her desolate home. By nature austere, her temper became soured and acrimonious as her age advanced. According to Birch, she passed much of her time in writing letters of admonition to her sons; which, as far as Anthony was concerned, were not always answered with equanimity. Many of these are preserved. But beneath their crust of austerity, we catch glimpses of maternal love and tenderness most touching. We see that which was the glory of her young days—her learning—eradiating—this mournful winter of her age; we see how earnest—beautifully earnest, was her religious faith; how severe her sense of moral duty; and one reads with wonder her faultless judgment of character. She possessed this point of woman's genius in an extraordinary degree. More than one cowardly informer—Howard, Antonio Perez, and others, who eat Essex's bread, and in the end turned against him, she judged rightly of from the beginning. There can be no doubt that much of this severity was called for. Puritanism, in that age, was the only shield that virtue had—in fact, all shades and aspects of morality were called puritanic. The morals of the court and younger public men were dissolute in the extreme. Principles were lax; policy was venal. Lady Bacon could but recollect the unaffected decorum of her husband, of Mildmay, of Walsingham, of Knollys, of Sir Thomas Smith. She might, and that with truth, sigh for the purer doctrines and fervid zeal of the first seceders; she might remember what virtue had been to “the first great martyr of intellectual liberty,” and foreseeing to what end such public and private laxity might come, seek through admonition to guide her sons. Happily had it been for him who inherited her genius, had he inherited alike this austere sense of duty. Then might we have been spared the record of adjudications dishonoured, if not made venal by a bribe; vindication of monopolies, subserviency in parliament; prostration before the basest form of kingcraft; tyrannous bigotry in the case of Peacham, and ingratitude to Essex. Then might mankind, in reckoning up the riches, ever gathering from the Philosophy of Fruit, have included virtue as well as wisdom, and anticipated the patriotism of the next generation.

But to return. Other influences about Gorhambury must have enriched the all-receiving genius of Bacon's childhood. It was celebrated for its avenue and splendid timber, their “leaves (in autumn) most varied,”* and in the abundance of such fine old English flowers—as,

“On the green turf suck'd the honied showers”

nursed his great liking for their scent and beauty. “For at every meale,” says Aubrey, “according to the season of the yeare, he had his table strewed with sweet herbes and flowers, which he said did refresh his spirits and memorie.”† Though but

one portion of a great whole, this love of beauty is, we think, one of the surest tests of his high organization and genius. He loved sweet sounds, sweet scents; his Titian eye revelled in colours, as we find by the New Atlantis, and his researches in optics; and we think these sensuous properties of his mind full of interest and significance, joined, as they were in him, with deep religious reverence and humility. It was as though conscious of man's small power and God's great wisdom, he strove to make such power worthy of Deity, by surrounding the greatness of his thoughts with the glory of Eden. There existed yet other influences. St. Albans' Abbey—though made the stone quarry for the building of his father's home—and the neighbourhood generally, must have still retained much of its pristine grandeur; and to its crypts, and cloisters, Norman arches and groined roof, we may owe his noble love of, and his noble thoughts on, architecture as one of the great contingents of human progress. For he had mind enough to separate a defunct superstition from that which had glorified it; and beauty, as wrought in stone, from the pretension of sacred infallibility. Nor could the remains of the ancient Verulamium, in its amphitheatre and massive walls, have been for *him* without effect; for in mature life, he had splendid visions of building it anew. More than this, as the ploughshare or the spade turned up the coinage of the Cæsars, fragments of Samian ware, or other relics of Romano-British art, he may have first understood how inseparable is the connexion between beauty and civilization; how forms of both disappear, but to reappear anew in higher type and in a condition of higher influence; and thence drew the logic of his splendid aphorism, "*that the end of art is to perfect and to exalt nature.*"*

In his sixteenth year, he returned from Cambridge, wearied of its barren studies and philosophy, and was entered as a student at Gray's Inn. But this was a mere matter of form, as he proceeded almost immediately to Paris, where he remained some time under the care of Sir Amias Paulet, the English ambassador at the French court. He then made a tour through several parts of France; but was finally recalled to England upon the almost sudden death of Sir Nicholas Bacon, in 1579-80. He then settled permanently, for some years at least, in Gray's Inn, and thenceforth this place becomes associated with his struggles, his learning, his divergence in many transactions from that high moral principle, which would have added so much to the splendour and richness of his genius. Had we to write alone of Bacon as a judge, a politician, or a statesman, oblivion would best consecrate the spot; but viewed in connexion with the philosophy of UTILITY and PROGRESS, and consequently, though in abstract, with the widest extension of civil and religious liberty, the place becomes a sacred site indeed, the more to be hallowed as knowledge grows, and the enthusiasm born of intelligence prevails.

* Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

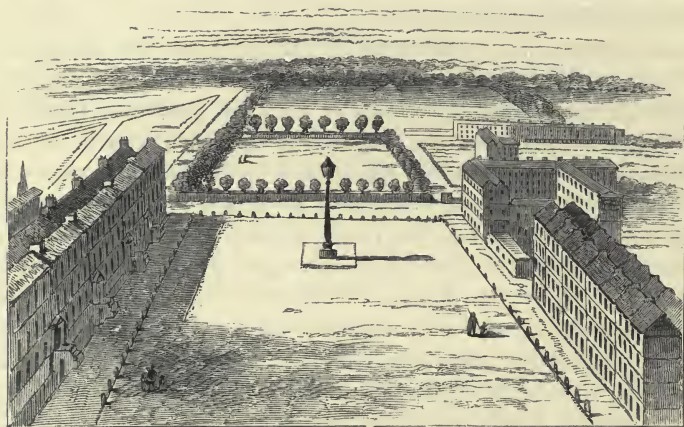
In early times, when "Oldborne" was almost a place of fields, the manor of Purpoole or Portpool came into the hands of the Lords Gray of Wilton. Besides their Inn or house, which they probably built, they had a chapel, occupying the site of the present one, in which a monk of the Priory of St. Bartholomew officiated daily. About forty years previous to the Reformation, the heirs of Edward Lord Gray sold this manor of Portpool, consisting of "four messuages or dwellings, four gardens, the site of a windmill, and eight acres of land," to the Prior and Convent of Shene, who in turn let it to the students of the law at an annual rent. At the dissolution, when the Church lands passed into the hands of the crown, a grant of the holding was made to the students at the same annual payment of rent, and thus the property remains vested in the Crown to the present day. Perhaps, in the history of London, nothing is more extraordinary than these grants of land remaining in the same quiet possession from generation to generation.

Gray's Inn, henceforth so called from its old possessors, was considered the most retired and rural of the Inns of Court. It stood without the liberties of the City, and to it might be well applied the remark of Sir John Fortescue, "that such places were fixed without the bounds of the City for the better and more quiet study of the law." So proverbially scanty was all collegiate accommodation in those days, as to make it probable, with the exception of the hall—which, replacing an older one, was begun in the reign of Philip and Mary, and finished in the second year of that of Queen Elizabeth—that the original "four messuages" remained without addition till the treasurership of Bacon. In Aggas's plan we see nothing but these "messuages," placed amidst quiet fields, with no boundaries but a few hedges and a low irregular wall. The present South Square was a field bordered by some small tenements towards Holborn; these were continued a little space up Gray's Inn Lane, between which and the present Brook Street, then called "Lither Lane," ran fields and an orchard, made possibly more romantic by the ruins of the ancient windmill of the Grays, the site of which is yet retained in name amidst the obscure purlieu of Leather Lane. Passing Portpool Lane, that of Gray's Inn wound its farther way amidst quiet fields to the river of Wells, and to the small and very ancient church of St. Pancras, "utterly solitary, old and weather-beaten;"* from thence to the northern road, in part the old Roman way to Verulamium (St. Albans), and so to the russet heights of "Hamsted."

Though opposed, rather than aided, by his kinsman, Lord Burleigh, Bacon rose rapidly in his profession. He was called within the bar in 1586, made a bencher of his inn, and two years later Lent reader; he also held the office of treasurer at the same time. It was at this period, or rather the year previously, that great improve-

* Norden's Middlesex.

ments in the Inn were commenced, under his superintendence. The garden, so rudely sketched out in Aggas's plan, seems to have been more formally laid out and planted; and amongst the buildings erected was probably the one mentioned by Rawley, as "that elegant pile or structure, known by the name of Lord Bacon's Lodgings; which he inhabited, by turns, the most part of his life (some few years only excepted), unto his dying day."* Much, however, as we should like to entertain a contrary opinion, we have no belief that any part of Bacon's "Lodgings," excepting it be foundations, is in existence, though the site of such is, we think, accurately stated. It was enthusiasm rather than correct judgment, that led Mr. Basil Montague to identify, in 1832, these "lodgings" with No. 1, Gray's Inn Square. In a very rare map, published



GRAY'S INN.

in 1640,† some six or eight tenements of different elevation occupy the western side, or, indeed, a point rather beyond it, of the present Gray's Inn Square, whilst the northern side is wholly filled by a dwelling of more recent and stately look; a passage beneath, as at present, at the eastern end, leading into what was then, and long after, a kitchen-garden belonging to the Inn—the site now occupied by Verulam Buildings. If we may trust the old map, these "lodgings" had a far more palatial character than the mean and disjointed tenements around, and, with arched openings to the several staircases, seem such as might be built towards the close of Elizabeth's reign. In

* Resuscitatio, with Life, by Rawley. Edit. 1657.

† The Cittie of London: or, Countreyman's or Stranger's Ready Helpe.

another rare map, published by Seller in 1680,* fourteen years *after* the great Fire of London, the general aspect of the Inn and buildings seems wholly changed. The garden is regularly laid out, and Gray's Inn Square has much of its present aspect, though known by a different name; for, divided by a line of mean buildings, it was known as Chapel Court and Coney Court, the latter being the more northern one. At the date Strype edited Stow's Survey, in 1620, these buildings had been pulled down, though the division was still kept up by a palisade.† Added to this evidence from maps, various indirect statements are scattered through antiquarian books, that Lord Bacon's " Lodgings " had been long removed; whilst the brick-work and style of architecture of the present square, in our opinion, bear unmistakable proofs of a date much later than the end of the sixteenth century. Brick-work of this character did not, it is well known, come into use till after the Fire of London.

Both hall and chapel have been consecrated by the presence of Bacon. He must have dined and supped in the former daily, for many years; it being one of the rules of the Inn, in the reign of Elizabeth, that all its members dined and supped in common.‡ It was also the scene of the costly revels for which the Inn was celebrated. The improvements Bacon effected in the gardens is less a matter of doubt. It scarcely is probable that any of the elm-trees he planted now exist; but successors have risen on the same spot, and we may yet possibly tread the " long walk " he so often frequented. The whole Inn was then an exquisite retreat for all the purposes of learned and peaceful study. Beyond its northern boundary of wall or hedge, quiet fields stretched away to Highgate and " Hamsted ; " for it was not till the reign of James I., that a road leading up the present Kingsgate Street, and so by the northern boundary of Gray's Inn, was brought into use for the king, in his journeys to his seat of Theobalds, in Hertfordshire. But even this was jealously secured by gates at either end, and retained so till the end of the last century. Till recent years, there existed a spot on the western side of the garden, called " Lord Bacon's Mount." It stood about midway on the site of the present Raymond Buildings, and was a mound of earth, shadowed by trees, probably raised for the purpose of a better view of the exquisite and peaceful landscape which lay beyond. The erection of this mound, and the writing of the fine " Essay on Gardens," may be of one date; for he says in the latter, " At the end of both the side grounds, I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast-high, to look abroad into the fields." This was exactly the case with " Bacon's Mount," in its early day.

A greater glory had, however, yet to hallow this ancient Inn, and to make it, if the fruit produced be taken for a sign,§ one of the greatest which time and genius have yet

* A Mapp of the Cityes of London and Westminster. By John Oliver. † Survey, p. 253.

‡ Herbert's Ant. of Inns of Court. Harl. MSS. 1812. § Novum Organum, Lib. i. aph. 73.

consecrated ; for here, through the larger part of thirty years, Bacon's greatest work, the "*Novum Organum*," was to be slowly elaborated. A work which, in Macaulay's beautiful and appreciating words, will cause him to "be named with reverence to the latest ages, and to the remotest ends of the civilized world." This we believe, if the great facts of nature, and the inductions they yield, be eliminated and spread abroad by the efforts of the highest educated order of intellect ; then may bigotry and superstition be as things unknown, and his noble enunciations as to man's ultimate power over nature, the humility of true knowledge, the value of the meanest things, whether elements or men,* and the unappreciable beneficence of Deity produce their richest fruit.

In 1586, Bacon began his career as a politician. On that occasion he was for the first and last time in his life a patriot. "The court asked for large subsidies and speedy payment, and the remains of Bacon's speech breathe all the spirit of the Long Parliament. But it was an outburst for which he received a reprimand he was careful not to forget." Power and place were the idols before which he bowed, and henceforth his noble visions of human good in its relation to human power were bestowed only as philosophic gifts to posterity. In this sense he made Liberty an angel, and gave her the universe for her home ; beyond this, and in all matters of practice, he bound her hand and foot, and reduced her to the basest of slavery.

In 1597, the first edition of his *Essays* were published, and dated from "My Chamber at Graies' Inn." In 1601 came the trial of Essex, and the disastrous part he took therein. In 1604 he was appointed King's Counsel, and in 1607 Solicitor-General. The balance of the good and evil in his life at this period is most extraordinary. The "*Novum Organum*" was advancing with slow elaboration, and his attention was directed to the reducing and re-compiling of the laws of England. "Yet, at this very time, he was employed in perverting these laws to the vilest purposes of tyranny." In the case of Oliver St. John, he appeared in the Star Chamber, as usual, for the prosecution, though, as a lawyer, he must have been well aware that such exactions were as illegal on the part of the Crown, as they were foreign to the common law of his country ; nay more, and to prove how the exercise of despotism in any of its forms tends to debase men both morally and intellectually, years after, he wrote of this Court of Star Chamber as a "sage and noble institution." If atrocity, injustice, and the worst perversions of law could make it so, it certainly was ; but the men who pervert justice are not the best judges of the character of the instruments of their own debasement. Of the same date as this question of benevolences was the atrocious accusation of Peacham. It arose out of a futile and blind attempt on the part of the crown to repress the rapidly-growing dissatisfaction of the

* *Novum Organum*, Lib. i. aph. 120.

people on questions both civil and religious. As usual, the blow was aimed through the Puritans. At whose instigation it is not known; "but Edmund Peacham was indicted of treason for divers treasonable speeches in a sermon which was never preached, nor intended to be preached, but only set down in writing," and found in his study. Not only did Bacon take opinion at the king's request, apart with the other judges—a fact hitherto unknown, as Coke well said, to the usages of the law, but he was present at the Tower during Peacham's examination, "before torture, in torture, and after torture," but nothing could be drawn from him. "His crying devil," wrote the venal statesman to his baser master, "seemeth to be turned into a dumb devil."* The truth was, there seems to have been nothing to explain. The sermon contained no other than opinions current amongst the Puritans; yet for these Peacham was formally brought to trial, found guilty, committed to Taunton jail, and died there a few months after. It was also at this period that Bacon wrote to James, suggesting that the recusants' penalties should be *farmed* at 20,000*l.* per annum. "I hold this offer very considerable of so great increase of revenue, if it can pass the fiery trial of religion and humour;" for "by the courses we have taken, they conform duly, and in great numbers," though, "I would to God, it were as well as a conversion as a conformity."

The honours for which he thus prostituted himself accumulated around. In 1616, he was sworn in of the Privy Council, and, in the year following, he was appointed Keeper of the Great Seal. He was now at the summit of worldly state and honour, the occupier of York House, and the owner of Gorhambury; yet the three years that succeeded "were among the darkest and most shameful in English history." To leave out of the question foreign affairs, the civil and religious condition of England could not be worse. "Benevolences were exacted; patents of monopoly were multiplied; all the resources which could have been employed to replenish a beggared exchequer, were put in *motion*; and patents of monopoly passed the Great Seal, for which Bacon must be answerable." In the case of Michell and Mompesson, so pregnant with results, Bacon not only assisted the patentees to obtain this monopoly, but "also in the steps they took for the purpose of guarding it." Nor was this all; needy as well as lavish, he was careless—we will not go so far as some, to say unscrupulous—as to the methods by which he removed his difficulties. He received presents from persons who were engaged in Chancery suits; though in his favour it must be said, that it was never found needful to reverse his judgments. The venality of his dependents was a notoriety of the time; this in addition to robbing their master. They all grew rich. "Three," says Aubrey, "kept coaches, some racehorses; and one left an estate of 1,000*l.* per annum in Somerset."†

* State Trials, vol. ii. p. 871.

† Aubrey, vol. ii. pp. 224, 246.

Bacon changed the title of keeper for that of chancellor, and celebrated his—

“Sixtieth year
Since Bacon and thy lord was born, and here.”

He had by this time greatly adorned York House, and built an aviary, which cost 300*l*. Twickenham Park, the estate Essex had so generously given to him, he had parted with many years previously to meet some necessity, but Gorhambury had now been his for full twenty years. He had done much to reinstate it in its ancient grandeur, besides building himself a summer retreat, or place of study, near the ponds, and called Verulam House. “It was the most ingeniously contrived little pile I ever saw,” says Aubrey. “From the leads was a lovely prospect to the ponds,” “and the stately walke of trees that led to Gorhambury House.” But the great



YORK HOUSE.

objects of his delight were the gardens and Oak Wood. The latter was his favourite place, for the trees “were very great and shady. His lordship much delighted himself here; under every tree he planted some fine flower or flowers.” There was also another coppice in which “his lordship much meditated, his servant, Mr. Bushell, attending him with his pen and inkhorne to sett downe his present notions.”* Hobbes—then a young man—was often employed in this interesting service.

The opening of the year 1621 found Bacon at the height of fortune. The “*Novum Organum*,” lately published, had met with universal admiration from the ablest men. He had been created Baron Verulam, and subsequently Viscount St. Albans; but neither place nor titles, literary honours or the patronage of James,

* Aubrey, vol. ii. p. 234.

could stay the resolve of a justly offended people. A parliament was called, and its voice was likely to be heard in tones not tempered by its silence of six years. The first question was that of public grievances, followed by an inquiry into the delinquencies of Michell and Mompesson. These impeachments were followed by others, including those of Sir John Bennet, Judge of the Prerogative Court, and Field, Bishop of Llandaff, for being concerned in a matter of bribery. Both these venal instruments of the crown escaped; the one in consequence of an adjournment of the House, the other with only a slight censure in convocation, for brokage effected *before* he was made bishop. In such way did the power of the State Church protect the preachers of Divine right, and of popery scarce hidden by its cover of Arminianism. But bigoted and unmanly as were the proceedings of the Commons at this juncture on religious points, as their sentence upon Floyde, a Catholic prisoner in the Fleet, proves, an irrepressible spirit of liberty had gathered strength with the growth of puritanism. Its inquiries were continued in relation to the aiders and abettors of the general corruption—that vice of the age, *vitium temporis*, as Bacon, in his approaching admissions, called it, who himself, in his judicial seat, had set so flagrant an example.

But this impeachment came. Its first mover has been variously stated; but it is quite certain that Bacon was loudly and publicly accused of injustice. He seems at first to have relied upon the shielding power of the king; but, situated as he was with respect to supplies, James, whatever might be his inclination, was powerless as to averting the impeachment. Yet, on all hands, the knowledge of his transcendent genius palliated his venality. "The person against whom these things are alleged," said Sir Robert Phillips, in his report from the committee appointed to inquire into the abuses of the courts of justice, "is no less than the Lord Chancellor, a man so endued with all parts both of nature and art, as that I will say no more of him, *not being able to say enough*."* Again, in the Lords, a few days after,—“The incomparable good parts of my Lord Chancellor” were admitted; but the proofs against him were not to be covered even by merit so distinguished. Overcome by shame and remorse, Bacon addressed a pathetic letter to the Upper House, pleading illness, and in his absence begging a merciful interpretation till his case was heard. The inquiry was stayed by an adjournment of the House, and James was appealed to. “Was the House of Commons to be his (Bacon’s) place of sepulture,” or was one to fall “who have ever been your man, and counted myself but an usufructuary of myself, *the property being yours*?”† It would have been well if Bacon had been less a mere laudatory instrument in the hands of royalty; as it was, it was not in the king’s power to save his chancellor without convulsing the realm.

* State Trials, vol. ii. p. 1058.

† Works, vol. xvi. p. 333.

The king advised Bacon to plead guilty. This was done at first with efforts at palliation. This did not satisfy the peers. He then delivered a paper confessing the truth of the accusations made against him, and throwing himself entirely on the mercy of the Upper House. Though excused, on account of illness, from attending Westminster Hall to hear sentence pronounced, it was severe. It ordered the chancellor to pay a fine of 40,000*l.*, and to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure. He was also declared incapable of holding any office in the state, or of sitting in Parliament, and he was banished for life from the verge of the court. But the fine was remitted, and he was released from the Tower after two days' imprisonment. He then retired to Parson's Green, and six weeks after to Gorham-bury, where he remained to the end of the year. During this interval he wrote a petition to the House of Lords, complaining of his country residence, "where I live upon the sword-point of a sharp air, endangered if I go abroad, dulled if I stay within." It was not presented; but he was soon suffered to appear at court, and, in 1624, the rest of the punishment was remitted. He was also summoned to the House of Lords in the next parliament, but he never again attended.

This extraordinary discrepancy between Bacon's moral and intellectual faculties must be referred to their uneven balance; or, as it may be better expressed, the effects were due to organic causes. The moral faculties were portionally not so highly developed as the intellectual, just as we more often find a highly moral person with weak intellectual faculties. Though taken as a rule, the highest order of intellect correlates with an equally high degree of moral act and perception.

It was this disparity, seen in his "ductility," as Hallam so felicitously expresses it, and proved by his weak rule over his avaricious dependents, which begot the worse charges made against him. He was not, so to speak, a bad man; but he was, in some senses, a selfish one; whilst, paradoxical as the assertion may seem, the very splendour and universality of his genius were, in a great degree, the creators of his weakness and his venality. He must surround himself with beauty and magnificence, with inventions and utilities. The first were but imitations of that which he saw in the universe as God's works; the latter but signs of man's ultimate and transcendent power over nature. He could only build and plant like a potentate—only give as with the lavish hand of a prince. Thus noble causes generated bad effects; hence his unwise luxury, his ostentation, his debts, his poverty, his carelessness of the methods which brought relief. In Bacon, we altogether miss those austerer virtues, which so heightened and added weight to the genius of Milton. Yet, as we have to take all things with abatement, even the highest, it is better that we should miss them than the great Christian doctrine of utility and progress; for essentially correlative and growing out of Christianity was the doctrine that obedience to nature shall produce fruit. It was likewise essentially the philosophy of the Reformation.

It was as inimical to popish doctrines as consistent with those of Luther and Calvin. The long-drawn advent of a purer, simpler worship, and the just interpretation of the Scriptures, were coeval with the active and inventive spirit of observation and induction begun by the monks in their silent laboratories. This ascending discovery of the secrets of nature was the cause of new effects—effects which, in their turn, needed the enunciation of a philosophy true to the nature so interpreted. The need was fully met by Bacon's genius. He enunciated and wrought up into a philosophy the sublime and altogether new and Christian truths that observation, humility, obedience, faith, and hope, are alike needful, if man would progress, enrich himself through a new and continuous discovery of the limitless bounty of nature, and live in harmony with the laws of God. Thus from the beginning, it may be said, that the great doctrine of causes and effects contained within it the true elements of an ascending civil, religious, and political liberty; and that Bacon, in laying down the methods of human advance and the amelioration of man's estate, laid down, at the same time, the elements, or alphabet, of human liberty in relation to opinion, and this, in its turn, upon acts as results. Influences of this important character as rarely arise as they are slow in effects; but this tardiness of evolution makes the results all the more potential and lasting; whilst we may be quite sure that all the important questions connected with civil and religious progress are far more essentially served by the enunciation and evolving of abstract principles, than by legislative acts or speeches.

Thus Bacon, in asserting that the methods of ameliorating the condition of man would be found in the interpretation of nature, and by stating the worth of Utility and the certainty of Progress, was one of the profoundest assertors of material and spiritual liberty the world has known. For the material advance of man necessarily precedes that of knowledge; with the gradual extension of which enlarged and liberal opinion is so intimately connected. Bigotry, intolerance, civil and spiritual despotism, and the coercion of opinion, are only other terms for ignorance. To make this less, to assail this many-handed cause of human woe, we have to look to education. For this can alone make clear to universal man that, under many forms and appearances, essential truths may exist and be the same; and that no one form, whether imposed by the State, or resting on the authority of human opinion, can be said to alone contain or constitute these truths. Looked at in this light, the spirit, and not the formula of religious observance, becomes essential. It is an alliance between man and God, and not between the State and the people; and one of the progresses of the time, one that philosophic and scientific truth will aid, one that every amelioration of man's estate will assist, is that of the freedom of his communion with the Divine. And thus the mistake made by the first reformers in connecting religion with the State, in placing spiritual authority in the hands of the

civil power, in endowing one formula with all possible benefits, must be necessarily rectified, and man's advance in civil freedom be equalized by that of his religious liberty.

After his fall, Bacon solicited a pension from the Crown : 1,200*l.* per annum was granted to him, and continued to his death. Added to this, he had 600*l.* a year from the Alienation Office, and from his own estate 700*l.* ; but this income did not suffice either to relieve him from debt, or meet his necessities. His servants were as notoriously venal as he was helpless in their hands ; so much so, that when one flagrant case was mentioned to him, his only answer was, "Sir, I cannot help myself."* His love of pomp and splendour never ceased. After his fall, he always travelled between Gorhambury and London with a retinue. "When his lordship was at his country house, at Gorhambury," says Aubrey, "St. Albans seemed as if the court had been there, so nobly did he live. His servants had liveries with his crest ; and his watermen were even more employed by gentlemen than the king's." At length, his necessities compelled him to sell York House, "so dear to him from many associations," and resort to his old "lodgings" in Gray's Inn, whenever he came to town—he had likewise to encumber Gorhambury, and other vexations, of which we know nothing except they related to his wife, embittered his last days.

But thus surrounded by sorrows and premature old age, the splendour of his genius shone forth and added a dignity of its own to the last four years of his life. During this period he added to the value and number of his essays ; he commenced a digest of the laws of England, a history of England under the princes of the House of Tudor, a body of Natural History, the New Atlantis, the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, or the Advancement of Learning under another form, and also his History of Life and Death.

There is reason to believe that the greater part of these last four years of his life, "which were employed," as Rawley says, "wholly in contemplation," was spent in the quietude of Gray's Inn ; and that up and down on its broad terrace, with its lovely view towards Hampstead—

"He sought and gathered for our use the true." †

The autumn of 1625 he passed at Gorhambury ; but he suffered much through the winter, for it was unusually severe. In the spring of 1626, his health and strength revived, and he returned to his favourite retreat, Gray's Inn. From thence, setting out on the 2d of April, on his return to Gorhambury, or more likely making a short excursion for the sake of air, he went with Dr. Witherborne, the king's physician, towards Highgate. As they approached the hill, the snow lying on the ground, it occurred to Lord Bacon, that it might, as well as salt, be made to preserve meat.

* Montague, vol. xvi. p. 389.

† Cowley.

They therefore alighted, and going into a poor cottage, bought a hen and tried the experiment. The coldness of the snow so chilled Lord Bacon as to bring on a sudden and severe illness. As he could not return to Gray's Inn, he was taken to the Earl of Arundel's house at Highgate, where he died, on the morning of Easter Sunday, the 9th of April, 1626, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. He was buried in the same grave as his mother, at St. Michael's Church, near St. Albans; but no account of the funeral is preserved, or of the site of Lord Arundel's house at Highgate. To clear up this latter point, Mr. Montague made many inquiries, though to no purpose. We have likewise sought in vain. It is supposed, however, to have been the most considerable house in the parish, and once owned by Sir Thomas Cornwallis, Treasurer to Queen Mary.* Gorhambury was left to Sir Thomas Meautys, his faithful secretary, through whose marriage to the niece of Lord Bacon, it has descended to the present Lord Verulam.† Verulam House was sold in 1665, for the worth of the material; and ten years prior to this date, the ground around it had been ploughed up.‡ In 1778, Gorhambury House was rebuilt on a new site, and the old place, long falling to decay, was left to moulder in the winds; yet even when no stone is left upon another, its site must remain a place of interest to all those who speak the English tongue.

But Gray's Inn, through succeeding ages, will be necessarily the hallowed spot, in connexion with the name of Bacon. For here, in a large measure, the great Christian philosophy of fruit must have been thought out and written; and here it was that Bacon saw, with prescient eye, that he had rendered "his age a light unto posterity, by handling this new torch amidst the darkness of philosophy."§ Here, in distant days, men may come to reverence, when "new creations and imitations of divine works"|| have ameliorated the human lot, and knowledge begot the reverence which is due to truth. Man will reach no ultimate perfection on this scene; but we believe that all Bacon's foresight of human power and knowledge will be far more than realized. In this we may take joy, for man's spiritual and material advance are one; and every improvement in his state, every obedience to nature, is no other than a new path to new conditions of his civil and religious freedom.

* Gentleman's Magazine, June, 1828.

§ Præfatio; Novum Organum.

Grimstone's Gorhambury.

‡ Aubrey's Lives.

|| Novum Organum, lib. i. aph. 129.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD FLEET PRISON.—THE SUFFERINGS OF THE NONCONFORMISTS.

BEFORE the city of London extended beyond the bounds of its first circumvallation, the valley through which flowed the stream, known at the date of the Conquest as the River of Wells,* must have possessed singular and romantic beauty. This is no



SOURCE OF THE FLEET.

hypothesis; on the contrary, literal fact. Old documents prove to us, that ancient London had no more lovely spot in its vicinity, than this wooded ravine upon its western border.

* Strype's Stow, edit. 1720, p. 23.

Taking its rise from springs that burst from the southern slope of the hill dividing Highgate from Hampstead, this river for ages flowed through the primeval forest, and augmented by the overflowing of the silvery springs which trickled down the wooded height, whereon, at a later date, arose the stately monastery of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, and the nunnery of St. Mary, and further increased by the little brook which flowed down the grassy slope of our modern Holborn, it swept, a wide and rapid stream, into the Thames; as pure from its shadowed sources, as a tributary of the Mississippi or Ohio.

This portion of the great forest of Middlesex makes a prominent feature in all the earlier annals. It was included in that portion of the great woodland south of the Trent, which Leland styles "*horrida sylvis*," and was greatly infested with beasts of prey. The Romans penetrated it, in forming their *strata regia*, or highway of Watling Street—originally, no doubt, a Celtic forest track—and which is said to have entered the western suburb of Londinium by our modern Portpool Lane. After the imperial abandonment of Britain, this portion of Watling Street, north of London, fell into decay, and in course of time was again overgrown with thick wood; so much so, that when the Abbey of St. Albans rose into repute, and multitudes resorted to its shrine, "to expiate their sins, and pray for worldly prosperity," Leofstan, the twelfth abbot, took the offerings laid by the pilgrims on the altar, as means wherewith to provide for the cutting down the overgrowth of wood, levelling the rough places, and rebuilding the bridges. This was needful; for in consequence of the impenetrable woods which surrounded it, the highway, where even accessible, was infested, according to Matthew of Paris, not only "with robbers, fugitives, and other abandoned beings" (be it recollected, that this monk was a Norman, and spoke thus of outlawed Saxons), but also with "beasts of prey." This road continued in use, till a lengthened quarrel between the monks of Westminster and St. Albans led the former to construct a new road, which being guarded by a gate for the purpose of a toll, gave its name to the village of Highgate. There was another gate at Hampstead, for a like purpose; it stood on the site of the little inn called the "Spaniards," at the end of the broad walk near Lord Mansfield's park. Within this park linger the last vestiges of the great forest of Middlesex. Though disafforested in 1218, portions of it remained untouched for centuries; "Hampstead Wood" was among the number. It covered a large tract of ground, so richly stored with game as to be a favourite place of resort with Henry VIII.* Here he came to hawk and hunt the game, strictly guarded by his royal proclamations. Here Wolsey had a small grange, or summer-seat, once the possession of the abbots of Westminster; and here, in the advent of the immortal contest against civil and religious despotism, came the old herbalists, Gerard and his

* Park's Hampstead, p. 19.

assistant, Johnson, the gentle precursors of our Linleys and our Paxtons. Curious is it, but so it is, that the several progresses of man towards the realization of truth, beauty, and good, are ever simultaneous and one.

Rising thus within the shadows of the "wild wood," literally so called, the River of Wells passed by Kentish Town, old St. Pancras Church, Battle Bridge—so named from the great battle of Alfred against the Danes, and a bridge that crossed the stream—thence by Clerkenwell, Saffron Hill, and so to Holborn and the Thames. Till far into the reign of Elizabeth—as we see by Aggas's plan—its course so far as Clerkenwell lay through solitary fields. Here a bridge seems to have crossed it. From thence it ran by fields again, almost near to Holborn. It must for ages have been a considerable stream, as, according to Malcolm, an anchor was once found in digging near old St. Pancras Church. From Battle Bridge, the whole valley from thence to the Thames, greatly altered as it has been in the course of ages, still shows that originally the outflow of water was large, and an Act of 31 Edward I. 1307, recites "that the river had been anciently of such breadth and depth that ten or twelve ships at once were wont to come to the bridge of Fleete, and some of them to Oldborne Bridge." Stow, gathering his knowledge from the old annalists, speaks of the ancient sweetness of the water of the River of Wells; and of the springs that flowed down the sloping banks of Clerkenwell. Fitzstephen has left us this exquisite description: "On the north side, too, are fields for pasture, and a delightful plain of meadow-land, interspersed with flowing streams, on which stand mills, whose clack is very pleasing to the ear. . . . There are also excellent springs, the water of which is sweet, clear, and salubrious,"

"Mid glittering pebbles gliding playfully,"

amongst which Holywell, Clerkenwell, and St. Clement's well, are of most note, and most frequently visited, as well by the scholars from the schools as by the youth of the city, when they go out to take the air on a summer's evening.* Of the scenery around such of these rustic wells as were near the grand monastery of St. John's, let us take this other picture. "Possibly England hardly afforded a scene of more romantic seclusion and rural accompaniments than was presented by these religious houses—the nunnery of St. Mary, and the priory of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem—at the period of complete and prosperous establishment. On every side but that towards the City, they had the prospect of wooded hills and uplands, intermingled with vales of luxuriant verdure; contiguous was the well-dressed, and, we will doubt not, richly productive vineyard; and at unequal distances from their precincts towards the west, the ground fell into those romantic steeps and secluded

dells amongst which the river took its course, and created, as it rushed through the numerous mills erected over it, the ‘delightful’ sounds which enkindled the descriptive enthusiasm of Fitzstephen.”* But all this beauty and sweetness of the River of Wells passed gradually away. The dwellings of the population “without the walls” encroached slowly upon it; the City wall itself, towards the west, was altered in 1282, for the purpose of enlarging Blackfriars Church. For hitherto extending “from Ludgate to the Thames, (it) was now made from Ludgate westward to Fleet Bridge, along behind the houses, and along by the water of the Fleet to the river of Thames.”† The purity of the River of Wells was from this time a thing of the past.



FLEET BRIDGE.

In 1290, the prior and brethren of the Whitefriars had occasion to complain to the king and parliament of the putrid exhalations arising from the “Flete river,” which were so powerful as to overcome all the frankincense burnt at their altars during Divine service, and even occasioned the death of many of their brethren. They begged that the stench might be immediately removed, lest they all perish. The monks of the adjacent Blackfriars, and the Bishop of Salisbury, whose house was in Salisbury Court, joined in the complaint. Another complaint was made, in the year already mentioned, 1307; the course of water, “by filth of the tanners, and such others, being sore decayed; also by raising of wharfs, but ‘especially by diversion of the water made by them of the New Temple for their mills standing without Baynard’s Castle.’” The river was accordingly cleansed, and the mills removed, but as it proved,

* Cromwell’s History of Clerkenwell, p. 13.

Stow’s Survey, Thom’s edit. p. 6.

to little purpose. It was constantly purified, and constantly complained of. A great effort was made in 1502 to bring it back to its ancient state; with such effect, according to Stow, "that boats with fish and fuel were rowed to Flete Bridge, and Oldborne Bridge, as they of old times had been accustomed, which was a great commodity to all the inhabitants in that part of the City." The end of the same century necessitated another effort to cleanse the Fleet. This was attempted by bringing the head waters at Hampstead into one, but the result was a failure. From this time the once sylvan river lost all honour, and thenceforth was known as Fleet "ditch," or "dyke." The Corporation of London took its improvement in hand in 1606, and had flood-gates erected; with but temporary result, for it needed fresh labours upon the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire.

No records give us the date when a prison was built on the eastern bank of the River of Wells. Probably at an early period, for two reasons—that it was the prison of the *Concilium Regis*, or king's council, an institution of Saxon origin, and that Saxon London extended greatly westward to the prior city of Roman occupation, and the ultimate city under Norman rule. Our first information respecting it has the date of 1189. In that year Richard I. confirmed to Osbert, brother to Longchamp, Chancellor of England, and to his heirs for ever, the custody of his palace at Westminster, and the keeping of his gaol of the "Flete," in London. In 1381 it was burnt down during the insurrection of Wat Tyler, and in the sixteenth century it acquires a new interest in its relation to religious persecution.

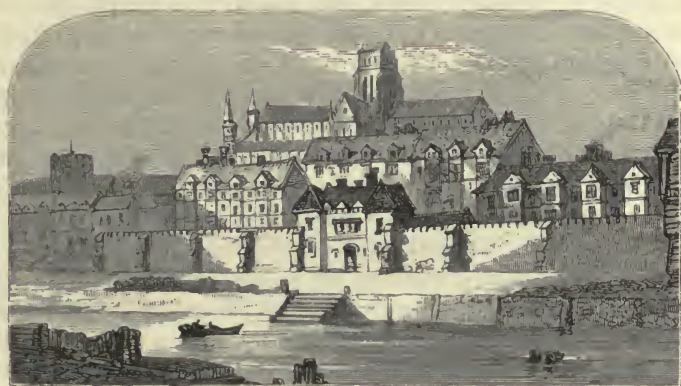
During this period, and prior to the Fire of London, little is known of the Fleet Prison as a building, beyond the trifling circumstances that it was inclosed, and had a yard and garden. Its bounds on the west was the river Fleet, on the east the Old Bailey, on the south Ludgate, and on the north Fleet Lane. It seems to have been used from the first as a prison partly for debtors, and partly for those committed by the king's council, or what was afterwards known as the Court of the Star Chamber. The prisoners were brought by water from Whitehall up the river Fleet, to a gate like the Traitor's Gate at the Tower, which led to what was afterwards called the Common side.* By what we may judge from Aggas's plan and Seller's map, published in 1640, the Fleet Prison appears to have covered a larger space of ground previous to the Fire than after it. With the exception of one central building near the water-gate, the prison has the appearance of an open space or yard, surrounded by houses serving as a wall, which towards the west was divided from the river by a wide pathway or wharf.

The chief official of the Fleet Prison was called the warden. His office was a patent, and was frequently let by its holders to any responsible person who would

* Cunningham's Handbook of London.

farm the prison at the highest rate. Sometimes this sub-letting passed through several hands, the power being generally confided to those who by means of cruelty and terror could extort the most from the miserable prisoners ; and the atrocities perpetrated by those who were at once brutal and irresponsible can be well imagined. The age of barbarism is not the age of mercy ; or men picked out from the dregs of society its best ministrants.

From the time of the enactment of the statute *ex officio*, or rather the one that was merged in that for burning heretics in the reign of Henry IV., there is little doubt but what the Fleet was used, as well as the other prisons of London, for the confinement of recusants. It was especially the king's prison, and when, after the incorporation of Church and State, every conceivable form of despotic power was



THE OLD FLEET PRISON.

gradually added to a tribunal destined to become unparalleled for its iniquity and injustice, it shared with the Tower, the Marshalsea, and the Gatehouse the honour—it may be truthfully said—of confining within its walls the victims of a State religion, and its natural correlative, priestcraft. The first who thus suffered for dissenting from the forms imposed, was the illustrious Hooper, and from the story of his imprisonment, told so touchingly by the pen of Foxe, the martyrologist, we may gather some idea of the atrocities perpetrated in those dismal places. Hooper had fled twice from England during the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. on account of opinions connected with the Act of the Six Articles. Upon the accession of the young king he returned ; but he soon became involved in the controversies which arose in respect to the retention of various portions of the popish service in

the reformed Church. Whilst Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer held that the retaining altars only served to nourish superstition amongst the people, Hooper as decidedly negatived the use of the vestments. This was no eccentric opinion of his own ; but one he had doubtless acquired from his extended intercourse with the great continental reformers, who, from the first, had advocated a simplicity as well as a purity of worship, far in advance of their age. In 1550, Hooper was appointed Bishop of Gloucester, but he declined the appointment on account of the wording of the Oath of Supremacy, and what he styled the "Aaronical garments." The oath was altered, but Ridley and the other bishops considering, like a large number of the German Lutherans, that the wearing the habits was a thing indifferent, the council was prejudiced against him, and Hooper was neither suffered to resign his bishopric nor dispense with the habits he thought indifferent. In our present day, when all the minor points of religious worship are looked upon by the great majority of people as unimportant compared with the practical manifestations of its truth and earnestness, the question is wholly different to what it was in the age of the first seceders from imposed formulas. It was then a matter relevant to the spirit of the Reformation that the aids of bigotry and superstition should be swept away with an unsparing hand ; for every vestige left of popery had its effect upon the minds of the multitude. Had this been done, and "things indifferent" left free to the will of each separate congregation, torrents of blood, and years of acrimonious dissension would have been avoided. But with a Church annexed to the State, and a supremacy which had only changed hands, anything like a wise indifference to the mere pomp of ceremony and variance of formula, was both impossible and improbable. Not willing to rely upon his own judgment, Hooper wrote to Bucer, at Cambridge, and Peter Martyr, at Oxford. They "gave their opinion against the habits as inventions of antichrist, and wished them removed ; but were of opinion that, since the bishops were so resolute, that he might acquiesce in their use of them for a time, till they were taken away by the law. The divines of Switzerland were of the same mind."* But these reasons did not satisfy Hooper's conscience ; whilst the attempt at compromise, both as to the question of the service and the habits, is one of the worst features of the Reformation. It did not tend to the end desired, is most certain ; for that it retained "the people in a state half-popish, and half-protestant, and thus increased the difficulties of effecting a more perfect Reformation, has been clearly shown in the history of the English Church. The truth of the matter would seem to be, that what a cautious and temporizing policy admits to neutralize present opposition, is but a transfer of the difficulty to some future stage, where it must be encountered under less favourable circumstances, and without that energy of feeling

* Neale, vol. i. 47.

and action which accompanies the first movements of religious reform. That which is tolerated in the hopes of future correction, becomes gradually the object of veneration, even to those who would have first consented to its removal. The disciples of Cranmer have defended, with bitter zeal, rites and ceremonies which there is reason to believe he sanctioned under a feeling of conformity only.”*

Still retaining his opinions respecting the habits, in which most of the reforming clergy joined, Hooper was committed to the custody of Cranmer, who, not being able to bring him to conformity, complained to the council, who thereupon ordered him to the Fleet, where he continued some months. The matter was finally arranged, and Hooper released upon his consenting to be robed in his habit at his consecration, when he preached before the king, and in any public place, but to be dispensed with at other times. He then returned to his diocese, and became such a bishop as the present age knows nothing of, for, “no father in his household, no gardener in his garden, nor husbandman in his vineyard, was more or better occupied than he in his diocese, going about his towns and villages, in teaching and preaching to the people there.” †

After two years of this apostolic rule, he was, upon the ascension of Mary, sent for by a pursuivant to London, probably at the instance of Bonner and Heath, then newly appointed as popish bishops to the respective dioceses of London and Gloucester. The ostensible charge against him was that he was indebted to the queen; but it was in reality to answer the grudge of the bishops, for having a wife, and not believing in the corporal presence. He was again committed to the Fleet, and we have this touching account of his imprisonment from his own pen. “The first of September, 1553, I was committed unto the Fleet, from Richmond, to have the liberty of the prison, and within six days after I paid for my liberty five pounds sterling, to the warden for fees, who immediately upon payment thereof complained unto Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and so I was committed to close prison one quarter of a year, in the Tower chamber of the Fleet, and used very extremely. There, by reason of a good gentlewoman, I had liberty to come down to dinner and supper, not suffered to speak with any of my friends, but as soon as dinner and supper was done to repair to my chamber again. Notwithstanding, while I came down thus to dinner and supper, the warden and his wife picked quarrels with me, and -complained untruly of me to their great friend the Bishop of Winchester. After one quarter of a year, and somewhat more, Babington, the warden, and his wife, fell out with me for the wicked mass, and thereupon the warden resorted to the Bishop of Winchester, and obtained to put me into the ward where I have continued a long time, having nothing

* Price, History of Protestant Nonconformity, vol. i. p. 75.

† Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. vi. p. 644.

appointed to me for my bed but a little pad of straw, and a rotten covering, with a tick and a few feathers therein, the chamber being vile and stinking, until, by God's means, good people sent me bedding to lie in. Of one side of which prison is the sink and filth of the house, and on the other side the town ditch, so that the stench of the house hath infected me with sundry diseases. During which time I have been sick, and the doors, bars, hasps, and chains been all closed and made fast upon me, I have mourned, called, and cried for help. But the warden, when he hath known me many times ready to die, and when the poor men of the wards have called to help me, hath commanded the doors to be kept fast, and charged that none of his men should come at me, saying, 'Let him alone, it were a good riddance of him.' . . . I paid always like a baron to the said warden, as well in fees as for my board, which was twenty shillings a week, besides my man's table, until I was wrongfully deprived of my bishopric, and since that time I have paid him as the best gentleman doth in his house, yet hath he used me worse and more vilely than the veriest slave that ever came to the hall-commons. . . . I have suffered imprisonment almost eighteen months; my goods, living, friends, and comfort taken from me, the queen owing me by just account eighty pounds or more. She hath put me in prison, and giveth nothing to find me, neither is there suffered any one to come at me whereby I might have relief. I am with a wicked man and woman, so that I see no remedy (saving God's help) but I shall be cast away in prison before I come to judgment. But I commit my just cause to God, whose will be done whether it be by life or death." *

This judgment was nearer than he expected. After three examinations, within a space of eight days, during which every possible method was employed to induce him to return to the Catholic Church, he was condemned at the same time with Rogers, prebend of St. Paul's. After this he was conducted to Newgate, where his degradation was effected by Bonner. The day following, "about four o'clock in the morning, before day, the keepers with others came to him and searched him, and the bed wherein he lay, to see if he had written anything, and then he was led by the Sheriffs of London, and other, their officers, forth of Newgate to a place appointed, not far from St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street, where six of the king's guards were appointed to receive him, and to carry him to Gloucester, there to be delivered unto the sheriff, who, with the Lord Chandos, Master Weeks, and other commissioners, were to see execution done. The which guard brought him to the Angel, where he broke his fast with them. . . . About the break of day he went to horse, and leapt cheerfully on horseback without help. . . . And so he took his journey joyfully towards Gloucester." †

His martyrdom was the most cruel and atrocious of those cruel times. Even

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. vi. pp. 647-8.

† Ibid. vol. vi. p. 653.

when at the place of execution, and engaged in prayer amidst sufferings too terrible for recital, he resisted temptation with sublime constancy; for a box being laid before him retaining his pardon if he would recant, his answer was, "If you love my soul, away with it—away with it." In truth, the first reformers were more or less worthy of the greatness of the cause they espoused, though the irretrievable error was theirs of admitting the magistrates' right to legislate for the Church. By this means a thousand evils were generated. The true policy would have been to have left religion to its native simplicity. But through making it dependent on the will and pleasure of the civil ruler, it was severed from its legitimate purpose, and connected henceforth with whatever worldly plans and purposes might be thought consistent with State policy. "The kingly or magisterial office is essentially political. Its power may be wielded by an irreligious, immoral, or profane man; a despiser of Christianity, or a blasphemer of God. There is nothing to prevent this, or to afford even a presumption that it shall be otherwise. What, therefore, can be more monstrous than to attach to such an office a controlling power over the faith and worship of the Church; to constitute its occupant the supreme head of that body which is represented as a congregation of faithful men? Amongst the many fantasies of the mind of man, none is more singularly absurd than this. It is in striking opposition to the nature of Christianity, and inconsistent with the obligations it imposes on its disciples. The Christian faith addresses man individually, soliciting an examination of its character, and demanding an intelligent and hearty obedience. But when the pleasure of a king is permitted to regulate the faith of a nation, authority is substituted for reason, and the promptings of fear supplant the perception of evidence and the confiding attachment of an enlightened piety. This is the radical defect of the English Reformation. . . . The reformers sanctioned the king's assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy by receiving the correction of abuses as an act of the royal bounty which might have been withheld. The people, therefore, were prohibited from proceeding further than the king authorized. They were to believe as he taught, and to worship as he enjoined. Suspending their own reason, extinguishing the *light divine* within them, they were to follow their monarch, licentious and blood-thirsty as he was, in all matters pertaining to the moral government and eternal welfare of their souls. Such was the system which Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, Latimer, and numerous other worthies advocated. Well may we weep over the weakness and folly of our nature, when such men could be induced to enhance and zealously defend so unhallowed and pernicious a system. Its tendency was concealed from their view; but the course of English history has rendered it sufficiently obvious to their successors."*

* Price, History of Nonconformity, vol. i. p. 634.

With the reign of Elizabeth religious recusancy changed hands ; for, after the first toleration of Catholics had passed away, a great number were imprisoned in the Fleet "for hyryne of masse." * In the third year of the queen's reign, a petition, emanating as it appears from prisoners as well as warden, was addressed to the lord keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon. The original copy of this petition is in existence, and furnishes some curious particulars of the prison and its rules.† It seems there were "noe certayne books, records, tables, or any other sufficient writing remayning within the said prison of the Fleete," "to the great trouble and disquiet of the sayd warden and prisoners," to remedy which a book was made "contayning the certayntie of all the p^rmisses, to remayne for ever in the same prison of the Fleete." The queen complied with this petition, and employed several of the judges and more eminent lawers to examine into the old customs of the prison,‡ and to either alter, reject, or adopt others. Amongst the new regulations it was enacted, "That the gates were to be open and shut at the same hours as those of Newgate and Ludgate ; no prisoner was to bring his weapons further than the lodge ; no prisoner was to buy provisions or liquor out of the prison without leave ; the prisoners might go abroad for the day on paying 8*d.*, for the half-day 4*d.*, to the keeper 6*d.*, and 12*d.* for the warden's box. It was also enacted that if a prisoner had more ease than the prison regulations afforded he was to pay for it." Besides the large sums extorted from each prisoner, according to his degree, for chamber, bed, and board, there were countless other methods of extortion, which we may be quite sure were never ignored. There were warden's fines ; others for the use of fetters and for the liberty of the house. There were also the clerk's fees, the fee of dismissal, of entering name and case, as well as porter's, jailor's and chamberlain's fees. In 1586 the cruelties and extortions in the Fleet led the wretched prisoners to appeal to the Lords of the Council. "The warden had let and set to farm the victualling and lodging of the said house and persons . . . to two very poor men, having neither land nor any trade to live by, nor any certain wages of the warden ; so that being also greedy of gain, they lived by bribery and extortion . . . they used new customs, fines, and payments, for their own advantage. And cruelly used the prisoners, shutting them up in close prisons when they found fault with their wicked dealings, nor suffering them to come and go within the said prison. . . . They also made away with the book that was always ready to be showed, containing all orders and constitutions of the said house."§ Nothing resulted from this petition, for in 1593 the prisoners presented a Bill to Parliament, praying reformation of the atrocities and extortions they suffered ; again without, as it appears, redress, as may be readily conceived, when the worst used prisoners were the victims of the Star Chamber and the dominant Church.

* Londinium Redivivum.

† Harl. MSS. 6339.

‡ Statute, 23 Henry VI.

§ Strype's Stow, vol. i. p. 256, edit. 1720.

After the elevation of Whitgift to the primacy in 1583, conformity was still more rigidly enforced. The prisons of London were filled, till, as an old Puritan well said, "the prisoners died like rotten sheep." Amongst those sent to the Fleet by the High Commission were the celebrated Henry Barrow and John Greenwood. They had been first incarcerated in the Clink, but were removed by a writ of habeas corpus to the Fleet. Here they remained from 1587 to 1590, when the High Commission appointed forty-three ministers to confer with the Brownists, to whose sect Barrow and Greenwood belonged. Numberless others of this body, to whose honour the first assertion of the independency of each Christian Church most assuredly belongs, were confined in the prisons of London. In the conference referred to, Barrow and Greenwood were charged with twelve erroneous opinions. They answered this assertion, denied the charges brought against them, and openly declared their belief. They then petitioned Lord Burleigh, who in turn wrote to Whitgift, and referring to the oath *ex officio* and its articles of examination, declared that these latter were "so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, as he thought the inquisitors of Spain used not so many questions to comprehend and trap their prey."* But the primate was deaf to this remonstrance, and "the extensive jurisdiction improvidently granted to the ecclesiastical commissioners placed him beyond the control of the temporal administration."† Finding their appeal useless, the Brownists published several pamphlets in their own defence, for, like the other Puritans, they had found the value of their pens in controversy. On the supposition that Barrow and Greenwood were the authors of these publications, they were indicted at the Old Bailey, March, 1592. The law under which they were indicted had been enacted against the books dispersed by the seminary priests.‡ This Act had now been for some time brought to bear upon puritanical writings, and was the one under which Udal had already been convicted. Barrow and Greenwood were both brought in guilty, and sentence of death passed against them. An attempt was then made to lead them to recant, by sending conformist divines to them in prison, but they were immovable. This failing, the atrocious farce was enacted of carrying them to Tyburn and placing them beneath the gallows, in order that the terrors of death might shake their resolution. But they stood firm. They were then carried back to Newgate, but finally executed at Tyburn six days afterwards. Their expressions of piety and loyalty were such at the place of execution, that when reported by Dr. Reynolds to the queen, she repented she had yielded to their death.§ Their fate has been attributed, and not without truth, to Whitgift; for what they had written against the Church and bishops he contrived to place as an

* Strype's Life of Whitgift, p. 157.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 206.

Hallam's Constitutional History, v. i. p. 202.

§ Neale, vol. i. p. 237.

offence against the State, and thus conferred the odium of their death upon the civil magistrate.

The doctrines of the Brownists were more obnoxious to the bishops of that age than any of the other forms of puritanism. Illiberal and narrow as some of their tenets might be, they yet contained the germs of an essential freedom, and "though rejected at first as democratical and irreligious, have subsequently made their way to the confidence and admiration of a large portion of the community."* The name of Brownists, or Barrowists, was changed afterwards into the more generic title of Independents—the most advanced and liberal of the seceders of the Church. "Brown," says an admirable authority, "maintained that the Christian Church is a voluntary association of believing men, that it is competent to the management of its own affairs, and is capable of existing under every form of civil government which human society can assume. He consequently repudiated its subjection to the State, and denied the possibility of its sustaining a national character. It necessarily followed from these principles that he should denounce the hierarchy as an unscriptural institution, adapted rather to advance the designs of its political supporters than to promote the religious welfare of mankind. He attacked the whole system of the Established Church, denying the validity of its orders, the purity of its rites, the rectitude of its worship, and the soundness of its constitution. He declaimed against it as a spiritual Babylon, loaded with many abominations of the Popedom, equally haughty in its spirit, though less powerful to accomplish its intolerant designs. On these topics he indulged in language, the harshness and asperity of which cannot be too severely censured. Forgetting the meekness of the Christian spirit, he employed railleury and invective when calm reasoning and scriptural exhortation would have been more appropriate. Some of his earliest followers partook of his temper; but the evil was speedily corrected by the consistent piety and sterling good sense of those who succeeded. Discarding his severity and uncharitableness, they condemned the anathemas he had uttered against all other communities, and blended the softer graces of Christianity with the fidelity that was requisite for the defence of neglected truths. His principles were thus purified from the alloy with which he had debased them, and were exhibited in a form which won the respect, even when they did not affect the conviction of impartial and reflecting men."†

Thomas Carew was another eminent Puritan confined in the Fleet at the same time as Barrow and Greenwood. He gave offence to the notorious Aylmer, Bishop of London, through complaining of the number of scandalous and inefficient ministers in the county of Essex, whilst worthy and able men were silenced for refusing

* Price, History of Nonconformity, vol. i. p. 313.

† Ibid. vol. i. pp. 315–16.

subscription. For this he was summoned before the High Commission, and accused without evidence with setting up a presbytery and condemning ecclesiastical censures.* To hasten the result, the oath *ex officio* was tendered to him, upon refusal of which he was committed to the Fleet, and even when released Aylmer did not rest till he had hunted him out of his diocese.†

But the oath *ex officio*, and the more than vain attempt of Whitgift and his subordinate bishops to enforce conformity, "honoured the Fleet," in the words of one of the Puritans writing to Anthony Bacon, with a still more noted nonconformist in the person of Thomas Cartwright. He was at the head of that class of seceders, who, at the close of the first period of Puritanism in 1570, had passed onward from a mere opposition to habits and ceremonies, into opposition to the Church itself. They were attached to it, and would have gladly remained in its communion. "But when their consciences were forced, when attempts were made to constrain their performance of services which they disapproved, when the bishops, instead of being overseers, became lords of the Church of Christ, and pursued with avidity every scheme which could increase their wealth, or strengthen their power, then the Puritans were driven to a closer and more scrutinising examination of the existing system than they would otherwise have instituted. The consequence of this was the rejection of the episcopal order, and a preference of the presbyterian form of Church government."‡

After years of exile for nonconformity, and various contests with Archbishop Parker, his successor, Whitgift, and Aylmer, Bishop of London, the Earl of Leicester had conferred upon Cartwright the mastership of an hospital he had founded at Warwick in 1585. Here, though unlicensed, Cartwright preached for some time, as it was exempt from the jurisdiction of the prelates; § and here he likewise, at the instance of Sir Francis Walsingham—acting for the queen—began a translation of the New Testament, but after completing a considerable portion he was forbidden by Whitgift to proceed further. Again he fell into trouble for nonconformity, and towards the close of 1589 he became involved, owing to the death of the Earl of Leicester and his brother, in matters relative to the hospital. During the next year he was summoned before the High Commission for what were styled "his innovations upon ecclesiastical order," "for having broken the law, for presumed knowledge as to who were the authors of the Mar-Prelate pamphlets, and for having penned, or procured to be penned, the 'Book of Discipline.'" || These charges led Cartwright to decline the oath *ex officio*, lest he might criminate his friends, though he offered to answer some of the charges upon oath. This not suiting Aylmer and the other bishops, Cartwright was committed to the Fleet. In the following year he

* Brook's Lives, vol. ii. p. 166.

† Neal, vol. i. p. 348.

‡ Price, Hist. of Nonconformity, vol. i. p. 214.

§ Clarke's Lives, edit. 1651, p. 370.

|| Fuller, Church Hist. vol. v. pp. 142—144.

and his brethren were brought before the Star Chamber for refusing the oath. Hence they were referred to the High Commission, then back to the Star Chamber, and finally they were sent to prison. Various persons of eminence interfered in their behalf, beseeching they might not be more hardly dealt with than the Papists.* The prisoners likewise petitioned the Lords of the Council to be liberated on bail, but Whitgift refused his assent, unless they would under their own hands declare "the Church of England to be the true Church."† This they decidedly refused to do. After a considerable delay, and an appeal to the queen, Whitgift consented to their release upon a general promise of good behaviour; his fear being, as it has not been without truth suspected, any further contest with so formidable an opponent as Cartwright. Upon his release he retired to Warwick, where he remained unmolested, though not unasspersed, till his death in 1603. For years before this he suffered so much from his long imprisonment as to be necessitated to pray and study on his knees. Dugdale called Cartwright "the standard-bearer of the Puritans." So far as leading on the great religious question of his time, from its connexion with the vestments to that of ecclesiastical power itself, he certainly was, but his views of religious liberty were most imperfect. He assisted with others to arouse the mighty spirit which in time men came to understand in the fullest and widest sense as civil and religious freedom, and he did good by his able exposition of the abuses of the hierarchy, but there the eulogium must end. He had no idea of what constitutes the true independence of the Church of Christ, though himself the victim of intolerance. "He sufficiently detected and exposed the abuses retained in the Church, and very forcibly stated the evils resulting from the ecclesiastical supremacy being trusted to the political head. Yet with fearful inconsistency he admitted the magistrate's authority to enforce religion upon his subjects. The only extenuation to be urged is that Cartwright's early training in the school of intolerance had familiarized him with its principles, and rendered him incapable of judging its inconsistency."‡

Smyth, Egerton, and Field, were others whose sufferings for nonconformity were connected with the Fleet Prison. Many of the followers of the first died in its close rooms, "like rotten sheep, some through extreme want, some from the rigors of their imprisonment, and others of their infectious diseases." Those that remained, after a lengthened exile in Leyden, returned to England, and, as it is supposed, were the first of those called General Baptists in this country. Egerton was minister of Blackfriars, London, and member of the presbytery erected at Wandsworth, in Surrey. He and Field were suspended for refusing subscription to Whitgift's three tyrannous articles in relation to the queen's supremacy, to the Book of Common Prayer, and to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England.§ Another of

* Strype, App. to Life of Whitgift, p. 266.

† Brook's Life of Cartwright, p. 249.

‡ Ibid. p. 261.

§ Neal, vol. i. p. 320.

Whitgift's victims—and they are countless—was a celebrated Puritan named Hildersham, called by the quaint Fuller “a heavenly divine.” Through a period of forty, three years he suffered incredible hardships, and was suspended and put to silence by the High Commission no less than four times. “Though he himself,” says Clarke, “was a constant nonconformist, yet such was his ingenuity and Christian charity that he respected, esteemed, and was very familiar with those he knew to be religious and learned, though of another judgment.”* The immediate cause of his committal to the Fleet was for refusing in 1615 the oath *ex officio*. He lived long enough to suffer under the tender mercies of Laud; was silenced for not reading Divine service in the surplice and hood, and was not restored till a few months before his death. He prided himself upon his nonconformity, for in his will he wrote: “I do hereby declare and protest that I do continue and end my days in the very same faith and judgment touching all points of religion as I have ever been known to hold and profess, and which I have both by my doctrine and practice, and *by my sufferings also*, given testimony unto.”†

A circumstance of peculiar relation to the Fleet Prison occurred in the first session of the reign of James I. which may not be passed over, asserting as it did one of the great privileges of Parliament. Soon after the important decision in the case of the election of Goodwin and Fortescue, which secured the jurisdiction of the House of Commons over the return of its members, arose the case of Sir Thomas Shirley. Having been arrested for debt before the meeting of the House, and placed in the Fleet, the warden refused to deliver him up at their request. Many plans were suggested for the prisoner's release, without effect, unless by involving the members of the House in a prosecution. At length they were necessitated to solicit the king, who upon this commanded the warden upon his allegiance to deliver up their member. What followed gave rise to a point of great importance, namely, the recognition of the legislative privileges of the Commons. An important proviso of this statute enacted, “That nothing therein contained shall extend to the diminishing of any punishment to be hereafter, by censure in Parliament, inflicted on any person who hereafter shall make, or procure to be made, any such arrest as is aforesaid.” The right of commitment, in such cases at least, by a vote of the Commons is here unequivocally maintained.‡

Yet, as before the dawn the darkest shadows lie, so did the iniquities perpetrated within the walls of the Fleet Prison at the instance of such infamous tribunals as the High Commission and Court of Star Chamber rise to their full height of despotism during the next reign, till the immortal Parliament of 1640 swept both tribunals away with a power as resistless as long suffering could make it. Laud rose into

* Clarke's Lives, appended to Martyrology, p. 381.

† Clarke's Lives, p. 381, ut supra.

‡ Hallam, Con. Hist. vol. i. p. 303. Parl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 1,028.

ascendancy, and for a season he seemed triumphant, for apart from the question of the Pope's supremacy, and an actual reconciliation to the Catholic Church, Laud was a Catholic. "Under his administration the Church of England wore the apparel and spoke much of the language of Rome. The doctrines of her founders were rejected, and the books which had advocated her cause and recorded the sufferings of her martyrs, were discountenanced or suppressed." * Every circumstance which could add to the power and aggrandize the Church was put in force, and no opportunity of subjugating the Puritans and nonconforming to the rigors of the High Commission and Star Chamber was allowed to pass. After various atrocious proceedings against the nonconforming clergy, a divine named Dr. Alexander Leighton fell under Laud's displeasure for publishing a book entitled "An Appeal to Parliament; or Sion's Plea against the Prelacie." It expressed his sentiments upon the hierarchy, and was dedicated to the Parliament. For this he was seized by a warrant from the High Commission Court, and dragged to Laud's house by a number of armed men. From thence he was taken to Newgate, and, without any examination, loaded with irons, "was thrust into a loathsome dog-hole, full of rats and mice; and the roof being uncovered the rain and snow beat in upon him, having no bedding or place to make a fire, except the ruins of an old smoky chimney, where he had neither meat nor drink from the Tuesday night to Thursday morn." In this loathsome place he was confined fifteen weeks, his house in the meanwhile being pillaged by the pursuivants, who carried off all they wished to possess. Whilst he thus lay, he fell so ill that his physicians supposed poison had been given to him, but no mercy was shown, for sentence was passed against him in the Star Chamber. Leighton confessed writing the book, but with no ill intention, his only object being to remonstrate against great grievances in Church and State. In answer to the first charge out of his book, "that we do not read of greater persecution of God's people in any nation professing the Gospel than in this our island," he boldly confessed the words, and said, "The thing is only too true, by the prelates taking away the life and livelihood of so many ministers and private men. . . ." This reply so irritated Laud, who was present, that he desired the Court to inflict the severest punishment. His desire was fully gratified; so much so, that when the horrible sentence was passed, he lifted off his hat and returned thanks. This monstrous adjudgment included imprisonment in the Fleet for life, a fine of 10,000*l.*, degradation from the ministry, the pillory, whipping, branding, the cutting off his ears, and the slitting his nose, at two separate inflictions. All this was executed with inexpressible barbarity, and the horrors of his imprisonment were increased by every conceivable cruelty. His bodily condition was so terrible, that when he came forth at the expiration of his ten or twelve years'

* Price, *Hist. of Nonconformity*, vol. ii. p. 51.

imprisonment, he was neither able to *see, hear, nor walk*, and when his petition was read in the House of Commons, November 7, 1640, it was heard with interruptions and *floods of tears*.* It is said that Leighton made reprisals for his sufferings when power fell in his hand, but this, as Brook well says, neither justifies intolerance nor persecution. Prynne was the next who suffered from Laud's episcopal zeal and taste for persecution; but his case will have a more appropriate place in the succeeding chapter. Associated with him, however, in time and sufferings, was Bastwick, a physician, for writing against the Pope's supremacy, and also Burton, for publishing tracts against Popery, and for preaching in his church, in Friday Street, against the monstrous innovations in the Church. Both were mutilated and fined, and sent to remote prisons, Bastwick to Carnarvon, and Burton to Lancaster. Their departure was as triumphant as their return. Upon their release by the Long Parliament, London, as it were, turned out to meet them. The crowd was so immense "that they were nearly three hours in passing from Charing Cross to their lodgings in the City." . . . In token of their joy the populace "carried lighted torches, and strewed the road with herbs and flowers; put rosemary and bays in their hats, and as they went along with loud acclamations for their deliverance, shouted, "Welcome home! welcome home! God bless you! God bless you! God be thanked for your return!" † Another case, the last connected with the Fleet as the prison of prelatic despotism, was that of John Lilburn. He was called before the Star Chamber with his printer, Wharton, for the publication of what were called "libellous books." But nothing daunted, both prisoners refused to answer the interrogatories of the court, and Lilburn fearlessly declared that no freeman ought to take the oath (*ex officio*) proffered by the Court, as Englishmen were not bound by the laws of their country to criminate themselves. Foiled in its attempt, the Court, after a second examination, committed both to the Fleet, under a fine of 500*l.* each, the punishment of the pillory, with the addition, in the case of Lilburn, of whipping. But nothing daunted "Freeborn John." "Whilst he was whipt at the cart," says Rushworth, "and stood in the pillory, he uttered many bold speeches against the tyranny of bishops," which reaching the ear of the Star Chamber council, who were sitting at the time, they ordered him to be gagged, and further, that upon his return to prison he should be "laid alone with irons on his hands and legs in the wards of the Fleet." After most cruel treatment, and a narrow escape from death by fire, he was released by the Long Parliament. A few years after, he wrote against the Parliament itself. For this he was banished the kingdom, but he refused to go; whereupon he was arraigned at the Old Bailey, with the result of a public acquittal, to the intense joy of the populace.

Pierce, *Vindication*, p. 180. Ludlow's *Letter to Hollingworth*.
 † Prynne, *Prelates' Tyranny*, pp. 113, 114.

Thus end the annals of the Fleet, as one of the prisons for the victims of two tribunals unparalleled in illegality and vindictive bigotry, except by the Inquisition. If this were all the Long Parliament bequeathed to posterity, its suppression of these two atrocious tribunals is enough in itself to ensure the lasting gratitude of those wise enough to desire civil and religious freedom for themselves and for others; for these two births of tyranny had "for several centuries so thwarted the operations and obscured the light of our free constitution, that many have been prone to deny the existence of those liberties which they found so often infringed, and to mistake the violations of law for its standard."*

What was the condition of the Fleet during the period of the Commonwealth we have little evidence to show. If we may believe Malcolm, its state was as vile, and its prisoners as wretched as ever. But this could scarcely be when the tribunals which had exercised an unlimited authority, and inflicted severer punishment than by any law was warranted, were swept away, and it became henceforth "a prison for debtors and those committed for contempt of the Courts of Chancery, Exchequer, and Common Pleas."† But, under all methods of administration, it seemed impossible to eradicate corruption and illegality from its walls. Notwithstanding the regulations we have referred to, Charles I. found it advisable to issue a commission in 1634 to inquire into the frauds and oppressions committed by the warden and his deputies, and the like was necessary in 1699, and again in the next century, namely, in 1728, when the celebrated report was issued, which in after years served as a text to the illustrious Howard, and to those to whom the country owe the great facts of prison reform.

As already stated, the prison was burnt down in the great Fire of London, and rebuilt, as seems to us, judging from Aggas's plan, on a more circumscribed scale, the prisoners being detained at Caroon House, in South Lambeth, during the rebuilding. The river Fleet, which had been in a disgusting state before the fire, was now again cleansed, deepened, and enlarged, and rails of oak placed along it. But in a few years it was as bad as ever, and supplied Swift and Pope with an object for their resistless wit. By degrees it was built over, its bridges removed, and Fitzstephen's "silver stream" is now hidden from the eyes of all, save at its filthy outlet into the Thames. Not many years ago it was yet powerful enough to give motion to some flour and flattening mills in the neighbourhood of Field Lane, Holborn; and Cromwell very pleasantly tells us of his memory of ancient trees, and overhanging declivities, yet green and sweet with flowers. All this is gone. . . .

But the hindrances and corruptions, both spiritual and material, of one age, lead, by a natural correlative, to what is ameliorative in the next. So, in our own, the

* Hallam, *Con. History*, vol. ii. p. 93.

† Report of the Committee to inquire into state of Fleet Prison, 1728.

prison of the Fleet gone to its last fragment, the large probability is, that here will be the central spot of the traffic of a kingdom, nay, of the world. Thus, here, where Master Hooper suffered his pitiful extremity, where Lady Bacon, Essex, and Burleigh visited Cartwright, where Barrow and Greenwood endured the vindictive bigotry of the professors of a State religion, for the assertion of principles more tolerant and all-embracing than its own, where Prynne, the most memorable of sufferers, nursed the memory of wrongs which more than all else brought Laud to the scaffold,—new assertors of human rights, and new vindicators of spiritual freedom, may come as to the threshold of their life's service. Nature is rarely unprolific; nor is an age which needs effects without the uprise of relative causes; and there is little reason to doubt but what the shires, the towns, the homely villages of England, will yield to their metropolitan centre as noble forms of intellectual richness as heretofore. Thus may come—consecrating the hallowed spot anew—the fresh young wisdom of the land, the courageous enemies of effete opinion and effete formula; the philosophers of a wiser age; the pleaders for individual independence of thought, speech, and conduct, which, in the words of the greatest thinker of our time, is “the only source of any real greatness;”* the provers through new truths, that “human knowledge, though not absolute, is illimitable;”† and that “those who seek shall find;”—in a word, those who will do for their age what Milton and Selden, and the wisest Independents of the Commonwealth, and many more illustrious men since then, did severally for theirs. In this way does time bestow upon us her priceless vindications.

* Mill's Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 512. † Morell, Elements of Psychology, p. 309.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPLE AND LINCOLN'S INN.—JUSTICE IN HER ROBES.

THE part taken by Englishmen in the civil and religious progress of their country, has not been confined to one section of the people, or to one profession. If the trained advocates of a State religion have, on the whole, been inimical to the advance of civil and religious opinion, except as such strengthened their own position, and advanced the promulgation of their own tenets, more may be said in favour of the advocates and expounders of the common law. To assert these laws as human rights, to declare their inviolability, except on constitutional grounds, are matters wholly different to the enforcement of religious doctrines; and unless the slaves of prerogative, unless the passive instruments of royal will, the lawyers, as exponents of the statutes of the realm, so far as these be founded on natural and prescriptive right, and common usage, have, on the whole, exerted a beneficial influence over the advance of civil, and, to a less extent, religious freedom; trained in the severe logic of rule, the common lawyers were less likely than other men to pass the constituted limits of the law.

Of the Inns of Court honoured by these illustrious instances of reverence for constitutional right and the liberty of the subject, the Temple has had pre-eminent felicity. As though by the balance of a great justice, the spot where "the poor soldiers of Christ" had suffered all that bigotry, superstition, and ravenous cupidity could inflict, "the bees being burnt for the sake of the honey," was that on which Magna Charta was signed, and the materials of the second charter—the Petition of Right—gathered together by Selden, Coke, and Sir Robert Cotton—the prologue to an ever-memorable play.

Ten years after the establishment of the order of the Knights Templars, who had rendered eminent service not only in the siege and capture of Jerusalem from the Moslems, but in the protection of pilgrims journeying to the Holy City, "saintly virgins, matrons, and venerable men," Hugh of the Temple came to England, where, and in Scotland also, a great sum of money seems to have been gathered for him. "Grants of land, as well as money, were at the same time made to Hugh de Payens and his brethren, some of which grants were shortly afterwards confirmed by King

Stephen on his accession to the throne, A.D. 1135."* The first chief house of the Knights Templars was erected in Holborn, amidst the fields, on the site of the present Southampton Buildings, and adjacent streets, and was called the Old Temple. As the order increased in wealth and influence, the Temple, "without Holborn Bars," was found too circumscribed, and the foundation of a nobler edifice was laid "opposite the southern end of Chancery Lane, then called New Street, which to distinguish from the former, was called the New Temple. This occupied all that space of ground from the monastery of Carmelites or White Friars, in Fleet Street, westward to Essex House, without Temple Bar, where Essex Street now stands, and some part of that too, as appears by the first grant of it to Sir William Paget by Henry VIII."† Besides the beautiful church, still preserved, consecrated in 1185 by Heraclius, patriarch of Jerusalem, "this new Temple was adopted for the residence of numerous military monks and novices, serving brothers, retainers, and domestics. It contained the residence of the superior and of the knights, the cells and apartments of the chaplains and serving brethren, the council chamber, where the chapters were held, and the refectory or dining-hall, which was connected by a range of handsome cloisters with the magnificent church. . . . Along the river extended a spacious pleasure ground, for the recreation of the brethren, who were not permitted to go into the town without the leave of the master. It was used also for military exercises and the training of the horses."‡ Besides this stately place, the possessions of the Knights Templars in every county of England were very great. On these estates priorial houses or preceptories had been erected, wherein dwelt stewards entrusted with their management. The income of the order in Europe has been estimated to have been at this period six millions sterling. They also enjoyed vast civil immunities—freedom from tithes and feudal dues amongst others—all of which were a continued source of umbrage to the regular clergy. Many abuses arose out of this enormous wealth, and their privilege of sanctuary. Whilst their good name lasted, "the Temple at London came to be made 'a storehouse of treasure.' The wealth of the king, the nobles, the bishops, and of the rich burghers of London, was generally deposited therein under the safeguard and protection of the military friars. . . . The kings of England frequently resided here, as also did the haughty legates of the Roman pontiff. . . . The convocations and the great ecclesiastical councils were frequently held at the Temple, and laws were there made by the bishops and abbots for the government of the Church and monasteries of England."§ We have also seen that the Temple was for a long period the great depository of the records of the kingdom. Upon the loss of Palestine, and the decline of the spirit which had

* Addison, *Knights Templars*, p. 30.

‡ Addison, p. 92.

† Herbert, *Ant. of Inns of Court*, p. 182.

§ Wilkins' *Concilia*, vol. ii. Addison, p. 125.

animated the first crusaders, the long harboured jealousy of the Church broke loose upon such Templars as the fierce eastern wars had spared. They became unpopular with the various kings, and "the rolls of Parliament about this time (1305) begin to teem with the complaints and petitions of the fraternity, of the infringement of their charters, franchises, liberties, and privileges, in all parts of the realm."* The sorrows of the Templars soon came to a climax. Detestable crimes were imputed to them—in all probability false to the very core, for it must be remembered that the order of the Knights Templars was an offshoot of a Church unparalleled for its greed—and therefore in one day they were arrested throughout France, put to the torture, and many condemned to the flames; and in the next year, 1308, the Templars were suddenly arrested in all parts of England, and their property seized into the king's hands, the king, in this case, being but the tool of the pope. Many of the most illustrious were sent to the Tower, where in one of its noisome dungeons, William de la More, the last master of the Temple in England, died of a broken heart, asserting to the last the innocence of his order. Upon their downfall there was a general scramble for the possessions of the Templars; and, though already granted by the Pope to the Knights Hospitallers at Clerkenwell, the king, Edward II., regardless of this, gave in the same year 1313, the new Temple to one of his most powerful barons, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster. Upon his attainder it passed into the hands of the Earl of Pembroke; from him to Hugh le Despenser. After the execution of this latter personage, Edward III., in the first year of his reign, made his peace with the pope, and the New Temple reverted back to the Knights Hospitallers, who shortly after demised it, for the rent of 10*l.* per annum, to certain students of the law, who are supposed to have removed hither from Thaives Inn, in Holborn.† Many years had not passed before this noble place suffered greatly in the rebellion of Wat Tyler. The insurgents "destroyed and plucked down the houses and lodgings of this Temple, took out of the church the books and records that were in the hutches of the apprentices of the law, carried them into the street and burnt them. The house they spoiled and hurt for wroth that they bare Sir Robert Halles, Lord Prior of St. John's, in Smithfield."‡ Through this means much material relative to the ancient condition of the Temple was lost for ever. Soon after this damage, the students of the Inn divided themselves into two branches, named respectively the Society of the Inner and Middle Temple. Each had a separate hall and other buildings which they continued to rent of the Knights Hospitallers till the suppression of the monasteries, when the Temple again reverted to the crown. In the early part of the reign of James I. the whole of the buildings included in the Temple was bestowed on the benchers and the highest legal officers of the crown, to hold through the right of

* Addison, p. 450. † Herbert, *Ant. of Inns of Court*, p. 183—189. ‡ Stow, *Thoms' edit.* p. 150.

"their heirs and assigns for ever, for lodging, reception, and education of the professors and students of the laws of this realm, on the payment of a small annual rent by each society." *

The great feature of the Inner Temple is the church, restored within the last few years in an incomparable manner, and in great good taste as respects the memory of



THE TEMPLE CHURCH.

the "poor soldiers of Christ;" whilst that of the Middle Temple is its magnificent hall. This latter—the roof of which is amongst the finest of the kind extant—was built between 1562 and 1572, during the treasurership of the celebrated Edmund Plowden. In fact, all the buildings, with the exception of the church, have been built within the last three centuries, a vast amount of building taking place in both Inns after the dissolution of the monasteries.

* Stow, p. 151.

Little is known respecting the origin of the Inns of Court, or the date of their foundation. They were never incorporated by charter; but are "voluntary societies which for ages have submitted to government analogous to that of other seminaries of learning." One of the great changes following the Conquest was that of the establishment of courts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the bishops being henceforth forbidden to sit as hitherto with laymen in the county or other civil courts. Thus all spiritual causes, and all those in which the clergy were concerned, were made over to the new jurisdiction. In the next century, the clergy were still more stringently forbidden to practise as advocates in the temporal courts; and when, by one of the provisions of Magna Charta, a supreme court of justice was established at Westminster, and judges appointed for the determination of all civil causes, the great distinction was finally made between those practising as advocates of the canon and civil law, and those trained as professors of the common or municipal law. The practice of the first was confided to the clergy, who withdrew to the universities; the latter to the more influential of the laity, who, studying the common law as a profession, formed themselves into societies, and became known as Apprentices of the Law.* During the Middle Ages, these law societies had an immense popularity. The youths entrusted to their care first studied in the Inns of Chancery; and, when sufficiently advanced, they were admitted into the Inns of Court, of which those of Chancery were as preparatory academies. "We are informed by a writer of this time," says Mr. Reeve, smoothing the rugged Latin of old Sir John Fortescue, though losing thereby somewhat of its picturesqueness, "that a student could not reside in the Inns of Court for less than 25*l.* per annum, and probably more if he had a servant, as most of them had. For this reason, the students of the law were generally sons of persons of quality—knights, barons, and the greatest nobility of the kingdom often placed their children here, not to make so much the laws their study, as to form their manners and preserve them from the contagion of vicious habits . . . for all vice was there discountenanced and banished, and everything good and virtuous was taught there—music, dancing, history, sacred and profane, and other accomplishments."†

Though somewhat of this praise may be placed to the account that the true workman is, at all times, prone to exaggerate the honour of his work, there can be no doubt but what this general training of the laity in the Inns of Court, irrespective of professional use, largely tended to that interest in the laws of their country for which Englishmen have been remarkable for many ages, and naturally led to a keen perception of all encroachments upon the liberty of the subject.

This separation of ecclesiastical and civil law from the common and municipal

* Blackstone, Commentaries, vol. i. pp. 13, 16. † Hist. of English Law, vol. iv. p. 121.

law of the country proved to be a vast source of discord between the laity and clergy. Where the latter encroached, there the former as steadily resisted; and "of this temper," says Blackstone, "numberless instances might be given." For a time, however, this jealousy slumbered. It was, however, aroused anew when Whitgift, soon after his elevation to the primacy, strove to enforce a universal conformity by his many-sided weapon, the oath *ex officio*. "The common lawyers," says Hallam, "had always manifested a great jealousy of the spiritual jurisdiction, and had early learned to restrain its exorbitances by writs of prohibition from the temporal courts. Whitgift, as tenacious of power as the most ambitious of his predecessors, murmured, like them, at this subordination, for such it evidently was, to a lay tribunal. But the judges, who found as much gratification in exerting their power as the bishops, paid little regard to the remonstrances of the latter. We find the law reports of this and the succeeding reigns full of such prohibitions. Nor did other abuses, imputed to these obscure judicatures, fail to provoke censure—such as the unreasonable fees of their officers, and the usage of granting licenses and commuting penances for money."* In the next reign, when the encroachments of the ecclesiastical power kept pace with the still more intensely arbitrary trespasses of the crown upon popular rights, and the Divine right of tithes had been preached from the pulpits as a new method of enforcing religious obligations, Selden, who had hitherto sailed quietly down the stream of antiquarian lore, published his famous book, "The History of Tithes"—by such contributing, though indirectly, to the strength of one of the greatest principles of religious liberty, that of voluntary instead of enforced remuneration for religious services. The predecessors of Laud had, through maintaining this latter doctrine from their pulpits, begun to regard it as fundamental to an established Church; and the very rumour that such a book was about to be issued excited the greatest alarm. "The many fancies," wrote Selden in the preface, "that malice, ignorance, and jealousy have found to themselves touching this (book) of mine, have been no less ridiculous, and some equally fearful, but equally false. . . . *Nor is it at all material what any one shall cast on it, through his secure confidence only in any of those old ensigns of dissembled ignorance or gravity, the bread, the habit, and the title. It is for such to learn, but not at all to censure.*"† A book thus bold and plain-spoken, and with such a stringent admonition to the hierarchy, was just suited to the gathering spirit of the time. Alarmed by a work which maintained "that their sole title to ecclesiastical power was founded on the laws of the kingdom," the clergy resolved on adopting their usual method of suppressing religious opinion. "The chief governors of the Church," says Heylin, after mentioning some replies to Selden's treatise, "went a shorter way, and not expecting till the book was answered by particular men,

* Hist. of England, vol. i. pp. 212, 213.

† Hist. of Tithes, edit. 1618.

resolved to seek for reparation of the wrong from the author himself, upon an information lodged against him in the High Commission.”* James, however, with his usual vain-glory, took the matter in hand. Selden was summoned twice before him, and, in the end, was led to sign a declaration of error, much to the joy of the clergy and the king. This was to be regretted; but “to confront a jurisdiction like the Court of High Commission required no ordinary share of fortitude, and Selden seems to have thought that he did all that the cause of truth could demand by avoiding any retraction of his opinions, or any acknowledgment of error in his statement of facts.”† This pusillanimity arose probably from physical causes. Studies like those of Selden enrich the mind at the expense of the body; but the error was nobly retrieved.

Selden had a predecessor in the defence of constitutional freedom—though allied with him at the noblest point of opposition to the enormous prerogatives then claimed by the crown. This was Sir Edward Coke. As early as 1606 Coke had asserted the independence of his judgment against the proceedings of the High Commission Court, and in the end struck the most effectual blow yet made against the exorbitant power of this tribunal. He proved that this and other illegal courts were constituted contrary to the laws of the kingdom; and thus did invaluable service to the cause of civil freedom. Again, in 1615 and 1616 he boldly thwarted the king in his unabated pretensions. He sought out with unwearied courage the murderers of Sir Thomas Overbury, and brought them to punishment, though one was the worthless favourite Somerset. For this continued opposition to the arbitrary will of the Court, he was deprived of his office of lord chief justice. He was restored to Court favour, but never again received judicial appointment. Despotism was beginning to need the suppression of truth as far as it was possible. But undeterred, the great lawyer sat in the Parliament of 1621, and took a spirited part in the debate against arbitrary imprisonment. He also set his face resolutely against monopolies. He debated points of political economy with an extraordinary wisdom, far beyond his age, declaring with quaint literalism, that “freedom is the life of trade, and all monopolies and restrictions of trade do overthrow trade.” Monopolies were considered the especial prerogative of the crown, and Coke, in procuring the abolition of several in this session, incurred afresh the determined hostility of the despotic king and his venal court. Parliament was dissolved by proclamation, and Sir Edward Coke, with other members, was committed to the Tower, his papers and securities seized, and a suit was commenced against him by the crown for a pretended debt of thirty thousand pounds.

But the great act of Coke's life, and one which, with his wonderful reports, will

* Price, *Hist. of Nonconformity*, vol. i. p. 530.

† Aikin, *Lives of Selden and Usher*, p. 27.

hand his name down to posterity, was his assisting in framing the Petition of Right. Through the same base acts employed against Sir John Eliot, Coke was deprived of his seat in the first and second Parliament of Charles I., but was returned in the third—that Parliament ever memorable for the precious liberties it espoused. The foremost question was the levying of taxes by the authority of the king alone, under the name of loans, and Coke, with not less temper and courage than the other leaders, stood firm against the insolent menaces of the king. “Let us,” he said, “whilst time serves, have good works. I am absolutely for giving supplies to his majesty: yet with some caution. . . . The State is inclining to a consumption; I fear not foreign enemies; God send us peace at home. For this disease I will propound remedies: I will seek nothing out of my own head, *but from my heart, and out of Acts of Parliament.* I am not able to fly at all grievances; but only at loans. Let us not flatter ourselves. Who will give subsidies if the king may impose what he will? and if, after Parliament, the king may enhance what he pleaseth? . . . Will any give a subsidy if they are to be taxed after Parliament at pleasure? *The king cannot lawfully tax any by way of loans.* I differ from them who would have this of loans go among grievances; *for I would have it go alone.*”

“I will begin with a noble record; *it cheers me to think of it*—26 Edward III. It is worthy to be written in letters of gold. *Loans against the will of the subject are against reason and the franchises of the land;* and they desire restitution. What a word is that franchise! The lord may tax his villein high or low; *but it is against the franchises of the land for freemen to be taxed but by their consent in Parliament.* Franchise is a French word, and in Latin it is *liberty*. In Magna Charta it is provided: That no free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or be separated from, or deprived of his children, unless through legal judgment, or by the law of the land. This charter hath been confirmed by sundry good kings above thirty times.”

The result of these debates upon grievances was the framing of the Petition of Right, in which Coke was worthily assisted by Selden and Sir Robert Cotton. It was the greatest, as it was almost the last act of Coke's political life. We have Selden's own testimony to the enormous labour incurred for this unprecedented great purpose. “With my own hand,” he said, “I have written out all the records from the Tower, the Exchequer, and the King's Bench; and I will engage my head Mr. Attorney shall not find in all these archives a single precedent omitted.”* And when to such zeal was added the profound legal knowledge of Coke, what wonder that the result was a clearer and more stringent definition of the people's rights than any yet attempted; and that the flagrant violation by the king of this definition as passed into law should prove to be the special cause through which he lost his crown? Soon

* Rushworth, vol. i. p. 527.

after the death of Charles, Selden published the notes on which the Petition had been framed, under the title of "An historical and political discourse upon the Law and Government of England." By reason of the commotion of the times, the book fell stillborn from the press; but on the mighty principle that there is no oblivion for truth, it was not forgotten. When Charles II. endeavoured to advance the prerogative of the crown beyond its just limits, the book was eagerly sought after. It was republished in 1672; but the Government prosecuted the publisher and printer, and burnt many hundred copies of the book. Again it was reprinted in 1682, and again was subject to prosecution, on the ground of these two clauses, which must have been especially distasteful to Stuart despotism. "I do easily grant that kings have many occasions and opportunities to beguile their people, yet can they do nothing as kings, but what of right they ought to do. They may call Parliaments, yet neither as seldom nor as often as they please, if the statute laws of the realm might take place." "Though kings may be chief commanders, yet are they not chief rulers." Still the book survived. It contributed, if indirectly, to the Revolution of 1688, and was reprinted in the following year. A curious circumstance was connected with all these later editions. They were edited by an evident descendant of Lord Bacon—a Nicholas Bacon of Gray's Inn—who added thereto with reverent hand from Selden's notes, a "Vindication of the Ancient Ways of Parliament," thus doing homage, as it were, to those principles of truth and spiritual freedom which the fruits of Bacon's philosophy will in the end produce. Time is only needed to show the profound concord between material progress, and that wise and fearless assertion of opinion, which will afford to others that liberty which it evokes and demands for itself.

On the dissolution of the Parliament, in 1628, Selden, with Eliot and other patriotic leaders of the Commons, was committed to the Tower. From thence he was removed by *habeas corpus* to the Marshalsea, and from there to the Gatehouse, where he remained in a sort of nominal confinement till 1630. In the long interval which elapsed before another Parliament was called, Selden passed his time amidst the quietude of literary pursuits. Upon the assembling of the Long Parliament in 1640, he was returned as one of the representatives for the University of Oxford, and in no wise deterred by the religious and political opinions of that body, he pursued, as hitherto, the same fearless course. He sat on all the important committees of the house—on that on the subject of ship-money, as regarded the unconstitutional decision of the judges of the Court of Exchequer; on that for inquiring into the arbitrary proceedings of the Earl Marshal's Court; and on that for preparing the celebrated remonstrance on the state of the nation. He sat, likewise, on the committee which prepared the articles of impeachment against Laud, and was amongst those who proceeded to impeach Strafford. But he opposed, on constitutional grounds, the bill of attainder brought against the fallen minister; and when the question of

the abolition of episcopacy was proposed, he negatived it, though no friend to the pretensions of the hierarchy. We must recollect that he was a lawyer, and had been trained to regard the Church as an inseparable portion of the State, though in the abstract, the Erastian doctrines, which he held in common with the more celebrated lawyers of that age, would have led him to deprive it of all coercive power.

To show its sense of his incomparable services, the Long Parliament, in 1644, conferred on him the office of Keeper of the Records in the Tower : an appointment as felicitous as that of Prynne's, a few years later. Still his parliamentary duties were as efficiently carried out as heretofore ; and shortly afterwards he took the Covenant, in common with the other members who adhered to the Parliament. He, and the other friends of moderate episcopacy, justified this it is supposed, "to their consciences by the pretext that in renouncing the jurisdiction of bishops, they meant the unlimited jurisdiction without concurrence of any presbyters."* But this was an oversight. The enforcement of a religious test, like that of the Covenant, was as obnoxious to all principles of religious freedom as the tests which episcopacy had gloried in ; and most certainly did not coalesce with the principles which Selden advocated.

He also sat in the Assembly of Divines, and, in conjunction with the small minority of Independents, opposed with some effect the bigoted proposals of the Presbyterians. Though the Covenant was imposed, and thus for a time Calvinistic formula seemed triumphant, Selden and his party boldly negatived the Divine right of its government, and voted the Covenant itself to be an encroachment on spiritual jurisdiction. From this and other causes, the Presbyterian discipline was but partially carried out in this country, though the benefices throughout England were chiefly held by this denomination till the period of the Restoration.

Our space is far too limited to give anything like a fair statement of the all-important principles involved in the religious doctrines advocated by the Erastians. The subject, however, cannot be wholly passed over, as the strongest and wisest advocates in our own day for the disseverance of the Church from the State, seem partially to misunderstand the great principle of religious liberty involved in the doctrine of Erastus. It has been said that he advocated the interference of the civil magistrate in questions of a religious nature ; but the truth seems to be, that with a profound philosophic view, infinitely beyond the age in which he wrote, Erastus placed all moral crimes and delinquencies in the catalogue of civil offences, and made them punishable at the hand of the civil ruler ; thus depriving churches and congregations of all coercive power, and leaving the conscience free to make its peace with God. Though the generous spirit of toleration evinced by the Independents

* Hallam, *Con. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 164.

stood out in marked contrast with the system of the Presbyterians, yet, "the master spirits of the age of the Commonwealth detected a latent error, and saw a seed of despotism and oppression even in this creed. . . . The Independents taught that a Church was a body of Christians assembled in one place appointed for their worship, and that every such body was complete in itself; that they had a right to draw up the maxims by which they thought proper to be regulated, and that no man, not a member of their assembly, and no body of men, was entitled to interfere with their proceedings. But the Erastians proceeded on another principle. They held that *religion is an affair between man and his Creator, in which no other man, or society of men, was entitled to interpose*. 'Who art thou that judgeth another,' says St. Paul, 'to his own master he standeth or falleth.' Proceeding on this ground, they maintained that every man calling himself a Christian, has a right to make resort to any Christian place of worship, and partake in all its ordinances. Simple as this idea is, it strikes at the root of all priestcraft and the usurpation of one man over the conscience of another."* In thus ignoring the recognition of spiritual offences, except in their moral relation to society, it is probable that Selden, with the statesmen and divines who embraced his views, would have restored to the magistrate the coercive power which the Church had assumed, and reduced the pastoral function to exhortation and prayer; but their theory, liable to abuse, as it might be, under the hand of power so delegated, contained the germs of a splendid and all-powerful toleration. "Erastianism is not a theory concerning the relation in which the civil authority stands to the ecclesiastical, so much as regarding that in which the people of any Church stand to the clergy primarily, and secondarily to civil power . . . and maintaining that the sacraments are strictly *means of grace*, it holds that Church rulers are not warranted in excluding persons desirous of partaking of the sacraments from joining in them or in the public prayers of the Church, on the ground that they are judged unworthy or unholy."† In a word, this is the question, however imperfectly stated by Erastus, or upheld by Selden, that to all moral and personal offences belong two relations—the spiritual and the civil. The first exists between man and God, and has no right to be coercively recognised by any human power whatever; the other is the relation between the individual and society, and if the offence alleged trespass upon the rights of any other individual, so as to come within the bounds of the laws laid down for the good of society, then, and then only, has the civil power a right to interfere. This takes away all coercive power from the priesthood of whatever denomination; robs priestcraft of one of its most coveted engines of authority; gives to the laws of a country the right of interference in cases of civil wrong; and, in all others, leaves the conscience free. These principles strike at the

* Godwin, *Hist. of Commonwealth*, vol. i. pp. 344, 345.

† Preface to *Theses of Erastus*, by Lee.

root of a State Church and a State priesthood—they ignore the right of any one formula of opinions being specified as *the* religion. They leave the conscience free, and tributary to no dominion but that of God. One of the great tendencies of civilization, is to a more and more stringent definition of human rights and civil laws, and to a boundless freedom of opinion; in appearance so, yet defined by laws, the laws of God and nature. To ends so great as these, Selden in his age ministered. His motto was, “Above all things, liberty,” and no man in that age of great men did more for civil and religious freedom, considered in their highest and best degree.

Other illustrious names crowd round us as we leave the Inner and Middle Temple. Littleton and Plowden, Raleigh and Overbury, Ford and Clarendon, Whitelocke and Ireton; but we have to speak of Hale and Prynne, and so pass on.

In Aggas's plan—which, by the way, was originally and secretly made for the use of the Spanish Armada, *had* it effected a landing—Chancery Lane has quite a rural aspect. Lincoln's Inn, then consisting of but a few tenements facing Holborn, is surrounded by fields. The other side of the lane is equally rural, many of the fields extending to Fetter Lane; and some of these, as part of the holding of the Old Temple without Holborn Bars, being used for the purpose of pasturage by the two societies of the Inner and Middle Temple. At either end of Chancery Lane stand houses round which lay gardens, celebrated by Stow and others for their luxuriance. In the reign of Henry III. Chancery Lane bore the name of New Street; this was changed for its present appellation when Edward III., in the fifteenth year of his reign, fixed here one of the offices belonging to the Court of Chancery. The two great features of the lane at this date lay both at its northern extremity. To the east the Old Temple, great part of which remained as late as 1595, and the foundations of whose circular church were discovered about a hundred and fifty years ago; and on the west the church and house of the preaching friars. These were built early in the thirteenth century. After some fifty years' possession, at a date when there was neither bounds to the rapacity of the monastic orders, nor a limit to the lavish credulity of the people, the “mayor and barons of London” gave to the preaching friars of London the tower of Montfichet, and two lanes or ways next the street of Baynard's Castle, whereon they built a church and convent. Their house in Holborn was then given by King Edward I. to Henry Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who on the site either built a new mansion or altered the monastery, so that it served for the purposes of his inn, or town dwelling. In close neighbourhood stood the magnificent inn of the Bishops of Chichester, built by Ralph de Neville, of that see, on an estate forfeited to the Crown, through the attainder of William de Haverhyll, treasurer to King Henry III. The great Earl of Lincoln, who died in 1310, assigned this estate, whether by gift or purchase is not known, to certain students of the law, who, fixing their residence here, were henceforth known as the

Society of Lincoln's Inn. About the same date they became the lessees of the larger part of the Chichester estate in their neighbourhood, the bishops retaining but such portion to their use as might serve for a London residence. At the Dissolution this last portion of the estate passed into the hands of one of the benchers of the society, and by his descendants was transferred and finally merged into the estate of Lincoln's Inn, in the twenty-second year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The old hall of the Earl of Lincoln was pulled down in 1492, but owing to a deficiency of means, fourteen years elapsed before a new one was erected; for this the timber was brought from Henley-on-Thames.* About the same date the great gateway or gatehouse tower, still existing in Chancery Lane, was erected, Sir Thomas Lovell, a bencher of the Inn, and treasurer of the household to King Henry VIII., being a great benefactor towards its building; the tiles and bricks for which were dug from an adjacent piece of land called the Coneygarth, so named from the quantity of rabbits or coneyes anciently found there.† The great age of this old gateway, the fact that it is but little altered, and that the original gates, swung in the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, yet remain, invest it with a singular interest.‡ Its reverend associations take us mentally back to the past, not without a certain pride, nay, glory, that our race has produced so many instances of human goodness, greatness, and intelligence. We tread literally in the footsteps of More and Cromwell, of Thurloe and Oliver St. John, of Prynne and Hale, of Tillotson and the "mild" Usher, of Ben Jonson, and possibly of Shakespeare. We who live in a more enlightened age, and are partakers of many inheritances of knowledge, can behold in the lives of some of these the shadows of intolerance, of bigoted opinion, of falling off from the true cause, of avarice and superstition: just as in the ages yet to come, *our* descendants, with their larger knowledge, will doubtless marvel at our sycophant cloth-worship; our intolerance of all but the orthodoxies; our suspicion of the new and the untried, till authority has recognised it. Yet were these men a light to their several ages; building up the steps of our present ascension, though full of shortcomings and indirect tendencies. Still may we be thankful for the track of light they shed upon the path of our common humanity. Glad, moreover, that the places of their going to and fro remain to us; glad that their glances fell where ours can fall; glad that our footprints lie close on theirs; and that the objects of their sentient touch can be still closed and opened by our reverencing hands!

Through the reign of Henry VII. and those following, various buildings were added to Lincoln's Inn. In the reign of Henry VIII. Chancery Lane, in a former day utterly impassable from mire and ruts,§ was wholly paved. Till the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, the only inclosure on either side of the Inn was an embank-

* Herbert, *Ant. of Inns of Court*.

† Spilsbury's Inn, p. 86.

‡ Ibid. p. 38.

§ Herbert, *Ant. of Inns of Court*.

ment of clay. A wall was then gradually built round—towards Holborn, the fields, and Chancery Lane. The celebrated terrace walk was formed in 1663, and the garden laid out in a more stately manner under the superintendence of a committee, of which Lord Bacon was a member.* The garden of Lincoln's Inn even then had an ancient celebrity. "There is preserved in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster an account rendered by the bailiff of Henry de Lacie, Earl of Lincoln, of the profits arising from, and the expenditure upon, the Earl's garden in Holborn, in the suburbs of London, in the twenty-fourth year of Edward I. We learn from this curious document that apples, pears, large nuts, and cherries, were produced in sufficient quantities not only to supply the Earl's table, but also to yield a profit by their sale. The comparatively large sum of nine pounds, two shillings, and threepence, in money of that time, equal to about one hundred and thirty-five pounds of modern money, was received in one year from the sale of those fruits alone. The vegetables cultivated in this garden were beans, onions, garlic, leeks, and some others, which are not specifically named. Hemp was also grown there, and some description of plant which yielded verjuice, possibly sorrel. Cuttings of the vines were sold, from which it may be inferred that the Earl's trees were held in some estimation. . . . The only flowers named are roses, of which a quantity was sold, producing three shillings and two pence. It appears there was a pond or vivary in the garden, as the bailiff spent eight shillings in the purchase of small fish, frogs, and eels, to feed the pikes in it. This account further shows that the garden was inclosed by a paling and fosse."† These particulars have exceeding interest. They not only ignore the commonplace idea that there were no gardens during the Middle Ages, no nature smiling with its leaves, its blossoms, and its ripened fruits, but casts a beauty of its own around the ancient place.

The old hall of Lincoln's Inn still remains, though many times repaired. Here the revels were held for which the Inn was so celebrated, but since the erection of the splendid new hall and library, it has been disused for all purposes except the sittings of the Court of Chancery. The present chapel, said to have been from a design of Inigo Jones, was built in the reign of James I., the old chapel of the bishops of Chichester having fallen into utter ruin. Under it lie the ashes of Prynne, and Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, and in its pulpit preached not only Churchmen like Usher, Donne, and Tillotson, but some celebrated Puritan ministers; Gataker, Preston, Reynolds, Caryl, who was employed on several occasions by the Long Parliament in their intercourse with the king, and Greenfield,‡ who preached the last fast sermon in the House of Commons, the 12th of June, 1661, before the royal orgies of irreligion and licentiousness were begun, or the nation had been taught

* Herbert, *Ant. of Inns of Court*.

† *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxiii. p. 303.

‡ Spilsbury's *Lincoln's Inn*, p. 73.

a bitter lesson of its own imbecility in trusting anew its liberties and its religion to the detested race of Stuart.

The lawyers of the Commonwealth added to the fame of this ancient Inn. Unlike the hireling judges of the first Charles, and the still more venal occupants of the bench in the reign of his son, the great lawyers of that eminently fruitful period of greatness were an honour to the justice they advocated. The names of St. John, Glyn, Maynard, Hale, Widdrington, Whitelocke, and Rolle, bear testimony to this legal fruitfulness. From his training under Noy, the notorious attorney-general of Charles I., it might have been looked for that Hale would have proved, when called to the bench, as venal as his master; but nothing could corrupt his incorruptible sense of justice. This high quality he derived partly from nature, and partly from education. He had been brought up by those of severe principles and religious life; by those who, in the noble words of Milton, understood that highest kind of liberty, "which alone is the fruit of piety, of justice, of temperance, and unadulterated virtue;" and thus armed and strengthened, he rose superior to the foibles of his youth, and the venalities that corrupted so many of his profession. At first he stood aloof from taking part on either side in the struggle begun between the Divine right of kingship and the liberties of the people. This neutrality was no "subject for applause," though, as we shall presently see, there could be no mistake, judging from his religious, what were his political views. But weak as is all neutrality at a period of eminent civil and religious peril, such as that was, it enabled Hale to show the even balance of his sense of justice. He appeared as counsel for both the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop Laud; and he also appeared in defence of the Duke of Hamilton, and Lords Holland, Capel, and Craven. These latter were amongst the royalists brought to trial after the death of the king, before that new and odious tribunal, a High Court of Justice specially named. In this affair, more consistent with the safety of the Government, than with principles of abstract justice or the rules connected with its ordinary administration, Hale, on appearing for Lord Craven, evinced the greatest courage. He was threatened for appearing against the Government, when his answer was, "That he was pleading in defence of those laws which they declared they would maintain and preserve, and he was doing his duty to his client, so that he was not to be daunted with threatenings." In spite of such opposition to the retaliative spirit of the victorious party, Hale had taken the Covenant, and had appeared several times amongst other lay members in the Assembly of Divines, at Westminster. Upon the establishment of the Commonwealth, he likewise took the engagements, "to be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England without a king or House of Lords," and appeared as counsel in the case of Christopher Love, who, with other of the Presbyterian clergy, were discovered as holding a correspondence with Charles II. and the royalists previous to the battle of Worcester.

Their claims to superiority denied, and their religious despotism unenforced upon the nation, as with narrow and bigoted intolerance they desired, the Presbyterians joined the royalists in their plots against the Commonwealth. The death of Love, however, "struck horror and consternation into that arrogant priesthood who had begun to fancy themselves almost beyond the scope of criminal law." *

Upon his elevation to the bench in 1653, Hale's resolution not to favour the wishes of those in power at the expense of justice, was more than once eminently displayed. He refused to take any part in the proceedings instituted against individuals for political offences. In one case he passed judgment upon a garrison soldier for the brutal murder of a royalist citizen; ordering speedy execution lest a reprieve should arrive, and this, undeterred by the threats of the soldier's colonel. On another occasion he refused to try a cause brought before him, when he learnt that the jury, instead of being returned by the sheriff, or by his lawful officer, had been returned by the order of the Protector, who had some great reason for interest in the cause. At this conduct Cromwell evinced the greatest displeasure. It was not always, however, that Hale's authority remained supreme. Noble as were his principles of religious tolerance, Cromwell, through his ambitious assumption of power, had his own motives for non-interference with the more violent of the sectaries. When Hale, during circuit, resolved to have some Anabaptists brought before him for rushing into a church and disturbing, with violence, the sacramental rite of a peaceful congregation, his purpose was interfered with. At this the judge declared that it was "intolerable that those who pretended so highly to liberty of conscience should molest others in the exercise of their religion." But the injustice was suffered to prevail.

To the glory of Hale, he was amongst those who proposed in Parliament that some security should be taken for the civil and religious liberty of the kingdom before Charles II. was summoned to mount the throne; but through the impatience of Monk to secure the first glory of this change for himself, and the lamentable reaction of the popular mind towards a slavish debasement, which it lived bitterly to rue, the motion fell unheeded. The glory did not the less belong to the incorruptible judge.

After the Restoration Hale reluctantly again took office. For nearly fifteen years he presided on the bench, during that time deriving a great glory and a greater ingloriousness from two special circumstances. The one from the admirable manner in which he assisted the other commissioners in the settlement of questions between landlord and tenant after the Great Fire of London; the other his condemnation, in 1665, of two wretched old women on supposition of witchcraft. This latter act can

* Hallam, *Con. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 236.

only be palliated on the ground that witchcraft was then generally believed in, and that minds cognate with that of Hale, in its admirable sense of justice and appreciation of truth, had made the same mistake in leaning towards the imbecile superstitions of their age. It is marvellous, nevertheless, and teaches, we think, amongst innumerable other instances of the kind, a profound lesson, which no age more than our own might aptly study. The martyrdom of the stake is gone, the Star Chamber is razed, the indignation of honest men has prevailed over iniquitous tribunals like the Court of High Commission, but the martyrdoms through bigoted opinion *yet* remain. The current beliefs and orthodoxies of the age are those to which men bow, and set down as irrefragable; not seeing that all things change, that all things progress, and that the judgments of one age are smiled at for their narrowness and weakness by the next. Let us draw a lesson, and a profound one, from the past; let us plead in the face of heaven itself for the next great liberty—that *summum bonum*, as Eliot would say, entire and perfect liberty of opinion—then shall we progress indeed, then shall we press onward on the pregnant path of truth, for nothing is eternal but the laws and the beneficence of the All Divine!

Two things remain to be specified of the great Hale, now Sir Matthew Hale. He earnestly desired an amendment of the law; for he admirably says in a law tract, published amongst others some years since by Mr. Hargrave:—"We must remember that laws were not made for their own sakes, but for the sake of those who were to be guided by them; and, though it is true that they are and ought to be sacred, yet if they be or are become useless for their end, they must either be amended if they may be, or new laws be substituted and the old repealed. . . . He that thinks a State can be exactly steered by the same laws in every kind as it was two or three hundred years ago, may as well imagine that the clothes which fitted him when a child should serve him when he was grown a man. The matter changeth, the custom, the contracts, the commerce, the dispositions, educations, and tempers of men and societies, change in a long tract of time, and so must their laws in some measure be changed, or they will not be useful for their states and condition; and, besides all this, time is the wisest thing under heaven. These very laws, which at first seemed the wisest constitution under heaven, have some flaws and defects discovered in them by time. As manufactures, mercantile arts, architecture and building, and philosophy itself, secure new advantages and discoveries by time and experience, so much more do laws which concern the manners and customs of men." It seems wonderful that one who could put down such a Baconian aphorism as this on the wisdom of time should believe in witchcraft, or leave, without summing up, the case referred to, in the hands of an ignorant jury. But this point of wisdom in one sense, and weakness in another, is amongst the anomalies of our being.

Hale has been accused of what Roger North calls "leaning towards the popular,"

that is, "that imploring and resting upon the direction and strength of God" he sought to give impartial adjudications in those last years of his life, when all persons of decent morals and religious principles were scouted and denounced for these relevant virtues. He made Baxter and Usher his friends, for he wisely considered that mere forms and ceremonies were things immaterial to the vital spirit of Christianity. He says in one of his religious works, "If we consider the matters wherein men for the most part place religion, we shall find quite another kind than what Christ instituted or intended, and yet all veiled and shrouded under the name of the Christian religion. . . . First is the subtleties of great scholars, schoolmen, and divines. . . . Next is the turning of the greatest part of religion into politic contrivances for attaining or upholding power, wealth, or interest. The greatest weight of religion is thus distorted to the end of wealth and power, so that a man that either questions or not observes the political additaments is as sure of censure . . . as he that denies the most unquestionable principles of the Christian religion. The third instance is in relation to the forms of Church government and ceremonies. That ecclesiastical government is necessary for the preservation of religion is evident to any reasonable and considerate man . . . and yet I do not think that the essence of the Christian religion consists in this or any other particular form of government. It is a great help to the preservation of it in purity and unity, and may be well called *sepimentum religionis Christianæ*, as the Jews called their oral traditions *sepimentum legis*, the fence of the law. But a man may be a good and excellent Christian under this or any form of ecclesiastical government. Nay, in such places where possibly there is no fixed form of ecclesiastical government established." After speaking of the intolerance of the mere formalists, Sir Matthew Hale proceeds thus—"Some persons, if they see a man otherwise of orthodox principles, of a pious and religious life, yet if scrupling some points of ecclesiastical government, though peaceable, they will esteem him little better than a heathen, a publican, a schismatic, and what not; on the other side, if they see a man of great fervour in asserting the ecclesiastical government, observant of external ceremonies, though otherwise of a loose and dissolute life, yet will there be many to applaud him with a style of a 'Son of the Church,' and upon that account overlook the miscarriages of his life, as if the essence and life of the Christian religion lay in the best forms of ecclesiastical government." . . . "Yet the true Christian religion is of another kind of make and another kind of efficiency, and directed unto, and effective of, a nobler end than those things about which, as above said, men so much contend, and that make so great a battle and noise in the world. As the *credenda* or things to be believed are but few and plain, so the *facienda* or things to be done are such as do truly ennoble and adorn human nature, and bring it to its due habitude both to God and man."* Then

* Sir M. Hale's Works, by Thirlwall, vol. i. p. 304. ut supra.

follow some passages too lengthy to quote, but of such exceeding eloquence and beauty as to bring to mind the rich style of Jeremy Taylor. Enough has been, however, quoted to show what mild and tolerant opinions, animating as it were with the true Spirit of Christ his daily service to the State, were held by this great Englishman; thus consecrating, through habitual truth and justice, all places honoured by his name.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate those atrocious proceedings of Laud, which, in the case of Bastwick and Leighton, have been already stated. Their sufferings were not greater, or indeed, so great as those of Prynne, whose *Histriomastix*, or "The Players' Scourge," however narrow in principle, and, unfortunately, most of Prynne's principles and opinions were narrow—was a profound flagellation of some of the gross abuses of the time, and not the less gross or corrupting in tendency, that they were countenanced and affected by the Court. "The plays which had been written in the preceding sixty years, were impregnated with the doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience. Kings were represented in them as persons too sacred to be called in question and contended with by their subjects; loyalty was shown as one of the first of virtues." This was not all. They encouraged, through reading as well as representation, dissolute and profligate manners, and it was no insignificant sign of the times, or an unapt commencement of the great struggle of human liberty against the presumptuous despotism of the few, that the stage and stage-players of the age were assailed by Prynne as fearlessly as they were. This book, in addition to his other writings against episcopacy, excited the restless and ceaseless hatred of Laud, who dreaded Prynne more than the rest of his enemies, or rather victims; for through his means it was that Prynne, not only suffered rigorous imprisonment, but stood in the pillory, and on two separate occasions had his ears cropped. His liberation from prison was one of the first acts of the Long Parliament, and his return, as in the case of Leighton and Bastwick, a continued ovation. From this hour, he had one purpose in view of which he never lost sight, the impeachment of Laud. He obtained a seat in Parliament, and pursued his object with a ruthless zeal that has scarcely a parallel. Laud was despised and hated by both the Scots and Presbyterians, and but few were inclined to shield him from his fate; but Prynne, careless of obloquy, never ceased till he had accomplished his purpose. The assertion of truth is never aided by vindictiveness; and old as he was, and enfeebled as he had been by four years' adversity and imprisonment, the best thing would have been to have dismissed him to obscurity and contempt. Nothing could teach Prynne toleration. Himself the memorable sufferer from episcopacy, he countenanced persecution as soon as his party were in power, and handled the same weapons against error as Laud and his partizans. The unity of the Church was his favourite theme; and all his proceedings both political and religious, so elucidate the spirit of his party—as to embody in

themselves all the principles of the most absolute Presbyterianism. He was against the sentence of death passed upon the king, and made a memorable speech on that occasion—and it was a pity, so far, that his expression of the popular wishes had not been attended to. The triumphs of the Commonwealth would have been nobler—and a man weak and treacherous as Charles I. would not have been handed down to posterity as a saint and martyr.

When the army expurgated the House, and refused his entrance, Prynne made Cromwell the fresh object of his merciless pen. For this he was imprisoned. He, however, pleaded the liberty of the subject with such skill, as soon to lead to his liberation. Upon the death of Cromwell, Prynne was restored to his seat along with the other secluded members of the Long Parliament. From this time his great object was the restoration of the king—thus essentially proving that he shared in the blindness of the faction to which he belonged. He was rewarded. He was made Keeper of the Records in the Tower; and henceforth employed his pen to a better purpose than that of scurrilous bigotry. Prynne's life proves how much a man may be fitted for one position and unsuited for another. No one more than he proved, both by his life and writings, the value of morality and religious faith; no one more than he, by incomparable industry and research, did more to elucidate those rights on which our constitutional liberties are founded—yet, no one more than he, helped to substitute persecution for toleration; or helped more to trample under foot, for a season, the rights of the subject, and the liberties of the nation—though but for a season, for the tyrant, the bigot, and the slave, had, at no remote date, to give way to a worthier man, and wiser counsels.

Yet, as he rests beneath the old chapel of Lincoln's Inn, William Prynne cannot be thought of without reverence and regard; for all men are not enriched with the highest gifts, or illumined by the light of truth.

Their ancient Inns of Court are dear to Englishmen, and will remain so, if principle is considered, if improvements in the laws are effected, if rules are simplified, and the inflexibility of justice maintained. But without such concessions to man's immortal nature, nothing can be stable or lasting; though, with this necessity considered, laws become one with the civil rights they advocate. Simpler and simpler they thus grow, till they are such, as, in the beautiful words of Hooker, "Rest in the bosom of God, to which all things in heaven and earth do homage; and from whose power neither the greatest nor the least is exempted."

CHAPTER VII.

ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL AND WHITEHALL.—THE USE OF POWER BY THE OPPRESSED.

LONG after the eastern portion of the site of London had been built upon, there is little doubt but what Westminster, as well as its opposite shore for many miles, was a mere swamp, covered at high water by the tide. Wren entertained this idea, to say nothing of a vast mass of collateral evidence ; * and in a still earlier age, there is much reason to suppose that Tacitus's description of the rivers of Britain "as foaming inland amidst hills and valleys," was as applicable to the Thames as to the great estuaries of the Severn and the Garruenos on the coast of Norfolk. Many of the merciless inroads of the early Vikings can only be explained by the fact that all the lower portions of modern Southwark were inundated by the tide—a tide which the Romans had kept out by a vast earthen bank, probably constructed when they formed their noble road of, what in Saxon days was known as Ermine Street, and brought it on piles across the swamps of Southwark.

The waters that thus spread themselves so wide, covered, there is little doubt, the whole space of land from what was afterwards Whitehall to Chelsea. For the marsh now known as Milbank was only preserved through several centuries from constant inundation by an earthen bank, raised by the abbots of Westminster along the river's edge. But there was one spot that stood high and dry from the surrounding waste, except on occasions of extraordinary flood ; and this, not so much from any elevation of its own, as from the drainage of a natural fosse or channel the waters had formed round it, thus leaving it an island, in time called "Thorny Island," from the abundance of the common thorn which grew upon it. This channel entered from the Thames, close to the south wall of the present Privy Gardens, formerly the southern boundary of the palace of Whitehall, intersected King Street, crossed Tothill Street a little westward of the Gatehouse Prison, took an eastern direction

* NOTE.—Since the above was written, the Report of Mr. James Simpson on the Victoria Street Sewer, has curiously confirmed Wren's and Malcolm's opinion. "The excavations for the Victoria Street Sewer seem to have confirmed what history has handed down to us, viz. that the low ground between Thorney Island and the village of Charing, was a swamp, overflowed at spring tides, with several streams crossing it ; and there is every reason to believe that large flows of water must have passed into the river at Scotland Yard. The back and foreshore of the river there is composed of more than the usual quantity of sand and silt, interspersed with gravel."—*Times Newspaper*, July 27, 1853.

by the south wall of the abbey garden, and along what is now College Street, to the Thames.* This old boundary of Thorny Island still exists, but, like the once crystal watered Walbrook and the River of Wells, it is now hidden and has baser uses.

Judging from many operating influences, it would have been curious rather than not, had no religious edifice been raised on this little island in those remote ages. For it was a northern superstition, and this derived remotely from the East, that islands, and more particularly small islets, were sacred places. On such as these the northern races performed, through preference, their heathen rites; and often to the loneliest, amidst rough seas, and the desolation of swamps and marshes, the fierce Viking, worn by age or wounded in battle, came to die. Partly from associations connected with this superstition, and partly to protect themselves from the sudden inroads of those fiercer than themselves, the Christianized Saxons built, for the majority, their first rude churches in such remote and hidden places. Croyland and Glastonbury are eminent examples, and without obeisance either to priestcraft or to superstition, we can but reverence the spirit which, in an age when there was no choice between dire heathenism and superstitious Christianity, led men to lonely places like Croyland, amidst the marshes of the Gervii, to teach their milder creed, such as they understood it, and to give protection to the wretched and the slave.

Causes of this kind led, there is little doubt, to the erection of a church on Thorny Island at a very early date. It was overthrown twice, but re-edified in the early part of the seventh century, and was then probably surrounded by a monastery and its officiating monks. But till the reign of Edward the Confessor we have no authentic account of either abbey or palace, though "the king's house" had probably stood here from the time of Canute. In that age the kingly and sacerdotal power were intimately connected, and the Confessor—a mere puppet in the hands of abbots and monks—gave a tenth part of all his possessions for the endowing a stately abbey and a larger and more populous monastery. He scarcely survived the completion of his designs. Mr. Capon, a very competent authority,† was of opinion that the palace and monastery formed originally one vast mass of buildings; that Poet's Corner was the king's private entrance to the abbey, and that no separation took place between them before the reign of Edward III. or Richard II. The palace was of great extent in all directions, running continuous with the shore of the Thames the whole length of the present Abingdon Street, and southward nearly four hundred feet to the little stream already referred to. On this picturesquely stood the great slaughter-house of the palace, and the abbot's mill, and over it a rude bridge, whilst beyond stretched the low green meadows towards Chelsea, like some scene in Cuypp's or Hobbima's

* Smith's Ant. of Westminster.

† Vetusta Monumenta, vol. v. Ground Plan, Ancient Palaces of Westminster.

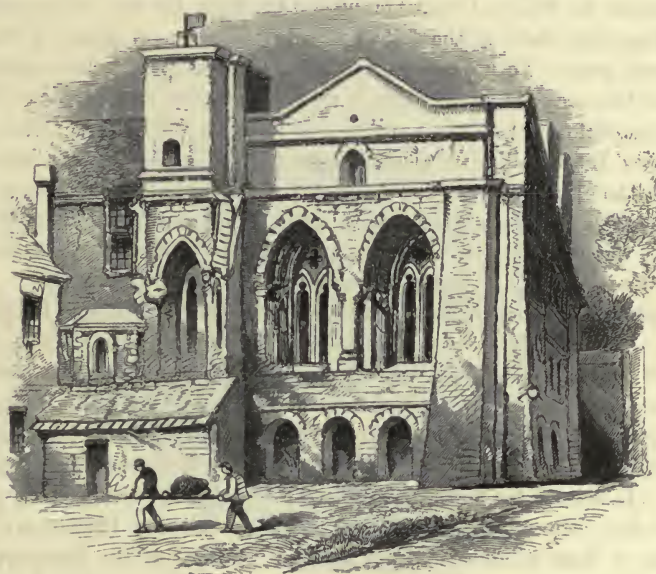
pictures. Northward the palace extended to the ancient Wool-staple—now Bridge Street—on the north side of New Palace Yard.

The palace of Edward the Confessor was greatly altered, added to, and repaired by subsequent kings. The Conqueror, used to the stately palaces of Normandy, built largely. His son Rufus formed New Palace Yard, and built Westminster Hall, intending it as a vestibule to a magnificent palace he did not live long enough to build. Fire was a constant destroyer in all the more domestic portions of this vast place. Two conflagrations at the close of the thirteenth century did great damage; and a severe one in 1512 supplied Henry VIII. with a decent pretext, a few years afterwards, for appealing to his Parliament concerning “the utter ruin and decay of his palace at Westminster,” and for making his fallen cardinal’s stately house his own. Yet all the more splendid features of the old palace remained; some of the chambers were used as a royal nursery in Henry’s reign, and afterwards as domestic apartments by Queen Elizabeth. Henry VIII. became possessor of the glories of York House—“henceforth Whitehall,” in 1529; and two years afterwards he obtained the land now known as St. James’s Park, by exchange with the abbot and convent of Westminster, who had hitherto only used it for the purposes of pasturage; for, saving near the abbey, and on its boundary near Charing Cross, it was little built upon.

From this date the old palace was used for few other purposes than those connected with the Parliament, the law courts, and the Court of Star Chamber. In the splendid hall of Rufus the Courts of Law had been held since 1224, when, in the ninth year of his reign, Henry III. confirmed the great Charter. St. Stephen’s Chapel, most certainly founded before the reign of King Stephen, but re-edified by Edward III., was given, at the Dissolution, for the use of the Commons, who previously, from the time of their separation from the Lords, an event which took place in the reign of Edward III., had sat in the chapter-house of the abbots of Westminster. Thus were brought into one focus the tribunals so pregnant with interest and results.

The beauty of St. Stephen’s Chapel must have been very great in its original condition. Its fine painted decorations were, for some cause or another, boarded over, at the period when it was made the council chamber of the commonalty of England; and these, when discovered in the beginning of the present century, contributed vastly to our modern knowledge of mediæval art. To the right of New Palace Yard, and close upon the river, stood the memorable Star Chamber, in part probably of a very early date, as it is said by Strype to have been the ancient council chamber, though a portion of it was referrible to the reign of Elizabeth—probably when she and her bishops re-edified the old tribunal of her grandfather, by way of enforcing uniformity. On the other side of New Palace Yard was a gate leading

into the Broad Sanctuary, opposite the Abbey, called High Tower Gate, built, it is said, by Richard III. From the Broad Sanctuary opened King Street, then reaching as far as the south side of the present George Street. A gatehouse stood at this end of King Street, from which at no great distance to the west ran what was called Thieving Lane, memorable as that by which *all* prisoners were conveyed to the Gatehouse Prison in Tothill Street. For in centuries previous, whilst the right of sanctuary existed, all other approaches to the prison would have conferred freedom on the prisoners. A bridge—built at the cost of Queen Matilda—crossed the great



ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

ditch in King Street, and at its northern extremity stood one of two gateways erected by Henry VIII. for the purpose of connecting his new palace with the buildings opposite in the park. This gate was pulled down in 1723. The other, nearer Charing Cross, stood some few yards from the south end of the banqueting house, built in the next century on the site of one that had fallen into decay. This latter gate was of singular beauty, and a *chef d'œuvre* of Hans Holbein. There was a way across its upper part by which the occupiers of Whitehall could reach the Tennis

Court, the Tilt Yard, the Cockpit, the gardens ; there was also a singularly picturesque flight of wooden steps, protected from the weather by canvas, and a long stone gallery from which spectators viewed the pomp and feats of the Tilt Yard.

Whitehall belonged originally to the celebrated Hugo de Burg, Earl of Kent, Chief Justice of England in the reign of Henry III. He became possessor of it through grants from the Crown, and by purchase from the monks of Westminster ; and this property, occupying the large space of ground from Scotland Yard to the old palace of Westminster, he gave at his death in 1242 to the Preaching or Black Friars of Holborn,* whose first monastery stood, as we have seen, on the site of the present Lincoln's Inn. These friars—who seem to have preferred coin to acres—sold it six years afterwards to Walter Gray, Archbishop of York, for use as an archiepiscopal inn ; and from that date to the fall of Cardinal Wolsey—a space of two hundred and eighty-one years—York House, or palace, as it was now called, remained in the possession of the see. It only proves to us the enormous possessions of the Church previous to the Reformation, when, as Howel remarks, “that from Dorset House in Fleet Street to Whitehall, all the great houses built on the Thames were episcopal palaces, with the exception of the Savoy and Suffolk House.”† In the time of Hubert de Burg, and for centuries afterwards, the street between Charing, past Whitehall to Westminster, was very narrow. Aggas's plan shows us this, as well as the low posts set about to limit the line of traffic still more.

The Whitehall of Wolsey was an immense and scattered range of buildings in the Tudor style. Its chief front lay towards the river ; and though we have little more than indirect testimony to that effect, Wolsey exercised his exquisite taste in architecture here as elsewhere. He probably built a hall, that, from the whiteness of its stonework, gave the whole palace a name, when that of York House was forbidden by royal mandate. We catch a glimpse of a fragment in an old print of the reign of Charles II. It adjoins the north-end of Inigo Jones's Banqueting House, and has a pointed roof and little mullioned windows facing what is now Parliament Street. It was from one of these windows and not from one of those of the Banqueting House, that Charles I. stepped upon the scaffold, which was built immediately under. The evidence of this—contrary as it is to common opinion, is in an old plan of Vertue's, preserved by the Society of Antiquaries. In front of this grange-like looking building runs a low and ancient wall, overshadowed by trees and shrubs, which give it a still older and more picturesque effect. At the rear of the Banqueting House appears the remains of a magnificent gateway, and at its south-end runs the wall of the Priory Garden, till it is met by the picturesque building of the Old Treasury, which forming an angle, goes westward till it joins the Holbein Gate. This latter

* Matthew Paris, p. 600.

† Londonopolis, p. 348.

splendid feature of Whitehall—through which so many dear to the patriot passed onward to their immortal service to the State—was removed about a century ago, in order to widen the street ; and it is probable that at the same time the Old Treasury was demolished. “The room above the gateway was, during the last few years of its existence, used for the keeping of records.”*

The ancient glories of Whitehall passed away with the reign of Elizabeth ; for James was no sooner seated on the throne, than he commenced pulling down the old palace—though without much adequate rebuilding, except what Howes in his



HOLBEIN GATE.

additions to Stow's Annals, calls “some fair lodgings,” and “a strong and stately banqueting house,” in place of one of wood and canvas, hastily erected in the previous reign. But this new work was swept away by fire in 1619. A palace on a grander scale was now thought of ; one that would combine beauty and proportion ; and there is but little doubt that if it had been erected, with its seven courts and its four enormous façades, it would have been worthy the great architect and his Italian style. But there was other work near at hand ; other work more essentially needed, than

* Stype's Stow, b. vi. p. 5.

palace building, and patronage of the arts ; for howsoever glorious the arts are, as manifestations of man's great and varied inheritance from the All Divine, there are other things more noble, more primary and essential. Of this class are the rights of civil and religious freedom : and these, trampled upon, and derided by priestly domination, and royal despotism, were about to be raised from their fallen and degraded state, in a manner memorable to all coming ages.

The Banqueting House, as a portion of the intended palace, was, however, built ; and not long after its completion, James I. died. His son and successor brought Rubens to this country to paint his father's apotheosis upon the ceiling at a cost of three thousand pounds. The palace would have been proceeded with, but Charles had a barren exchequer ; and his dissensions with his subjects, his vain attempts to govern without Parliaments, his own and his ministers' encroachments upon the national liberties, his confirmed duplicity and love of base reservation, made all things improbable but civil war. It is, therefore, most likely that Fisher's admirable plan of Whitehall as it was in the reign of Charles II. gives us, if we take away the mere names attached to what are called the "lodgings," a fair idea of it as it existed during the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate ; for, during this time, few alterations could have been made. Cromwell and those around him had other work, and other reformations to effect ; and we learn from many sources that a considerable portion of Whitehall fell into great disorder and ruin during the troubles of the time. Cromwell did not take up his residence there till the beginning of the year 1654, as we have this notice in one of the small news-sheets of the period, "Whitehall is preparing for his Highness to reside in ; and the old council-chamber is fitting for the honourable his council."* Thus for twelve years, at least, it had stood deserted for all purposes, except such as were connected with the business of the State. Its lesser portions were let out to tenants ; and stripped of its rich pictures, hangings and furniture, its bare walls and grass-grown courts were surely signs enough of the old truth, that desolation is an irrepressible sequence of tyranny and injustice.

Different was its appearance, when a few years before, Strafford with his "thorough," and Laud with his bigotry and vicious tyranny were in the ascendant ; when Prynne, Leighton, and Bastwick lay mutilated and rotting in their dungeons—when every jail was filled with the nonconforming—when men were fleeing to the wildernesses of the west—when Parliaments were out of date, the people starving, and "the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition were more than realized by the forced-loan inquisitors." If the extravagance of the court was less glaring than in the previous reign, it was scarcely less profuse ; and if a shade more decency was thrown over its masques and festive

* Cromwellian, p. 132.

celebrations, it was decorum only skin deep. For twelve years no man had been able to call his property his own, and for what use were such monstrous and illegal exactions? Those who defend the king upon a principle of Divine right, say, the State. History and historical documents prove the contrary. It was to gratify some personal vanity; to arm some instrument of despotic power; to pave the way to some encroachment upon the liberties and religion of those from whom the means were derived; to deck out some worthless embassy; to give Buckingham a jewel; or to lavish presents upon the queen's dependents and priests. The influence of Henrietta was throughout pernicious. From the time of Buckingham's death she had no rival in the king's favour; and her ascendancy went on increasing, "till even Laud and Strafford found it needful to tolerate her interference, and promote her objects."* To her, as much as to Laud, Prynne owed his awful mutilation; and in their dread of popery and the influence of the priests she kept around her, the Puritans found a just cause for their fears.

After eleven years' cessation of Parliaments, one was called together early in the year of 1640. It at once reverted to its old question of grievances, and resolved that redress should be conceded before the supply demanded was attended to. As customary, a dissolution was the result, after a brief session of three weeks. The same year saw another Parliament summoned, composed in portion of the ablest men—men of whom there was no likelihood that they would abate their just demands for redress, or fail either in courage, or in an austere sense of duty. Amongst these were Pym, St. John, Hampden, Hollis, Fiennes, and the younger Vane. In summoning this famous Parliament, the king had two purposes—a supply, and a riddance of the Scots. But it was soon apparent that the Commons considered itself assembled for the redress of grievances on many questions and in all departments of the government. It lost no time. It declared that the judges had overthrown the law, and the bishops the Gospel; it achieved its masterstroke in the impeachment of Strafford and Laud, and proceeded at once to the great question of religion and its multiplied hindrances. "Religion with them was a serious consideration, a topic which they were disposed to treat with good faith and in earnest. They were sincere patriots to the best of their judgment, anxious to promote the welfare of their fellow-creatures. They knew that there can be no real liberty and no good political government without morality; and they believed that the morality of the various members of the community intimately depended upon their religious creed, and upon the character and conduct of the ministers of the national religion." What that character and conduct had been, the state of the nation only proved too well. "He is a great stranger in our Israel, who knows not that this kingdom has

* Aikin's Charles I. vol. i. p. 301.

long laboured under many and great oppressions," pleaded Lord Falkland in the first debates upon the question of episcopacy, "and that a principal cause of both has been some bishops and their adherents, who, under pretence of uniformity, have brought in superstition and scandal under the title of decency; who have defiled our churches by adorning them, and slackened the strictness of that union that was between us and those of our religion beyond sea—an action both impolitic and ungodly. They have been less eager on those who damn our Church, than on those who, on weak consciences, and perhaps as weak reason, only abstain from it. Nay, it has been more dangerous for men to go to a neighbouring parish, when they had no sermon in their own, than to be obstinate and perpetual recusants. While mass has been said in security, a conventicle has been a crime; and what is yet more, the conforming to ceremonies has been more exacted than the conforming to Christianity; and while men for simples have been undone, for great crimes they have only been admonished. . . . Mr. Speaker, they have resembled the dog in the fable, they have neither practised nor employed those that should, nor suffered those that would. They have brought in catechizing only to thrust out preaching; cried down lectures by the name of faction, either because other men's industry in that duty appeared as reproof to their neglect, or with intent to have brought in darkness, that they might the easier sow their tares whilst it was night. . . . In short, their work has been to try how much of the papist might be brought in without popery, and to destroy as much as they could of the Gospel, without bringing themselves in danger of being destroyed by the law." Such was the character given of prelacy and prelatie abuse by one of the advocates of episcopacy. The opinion of a still more ardent royalist was equally stringent. After declaring that no people had been so insulted as those of England by their prelates, Lord George Digby thus continued:—"Their vengeance has been so laid, as if it were meant no generation, no degree, no complexion of mankind should escape it. Was there a man of tender conscience? him they loaded with unnecessary impositions. Was there a man of legal conscience? him they nettled with innovations and fresh introductions to popery. Was there a man of humble spirit? him they trampled to dirt in their pride. Was there a man of proud spirit? him they bereft of reason with indignation at their superlative insolence. Was there a man faithfully attached to the rights of the Crown? how has he been gulled by their new oath! Was there a man that durst mutter against their insolences? he may inquire for his lugs." Such was the character of these bishops by their friends!

There is little reason to doubt but that concession at this period would have saved episcopacy. But, bent wilfully, as it seemed, upon their own destruction, the bishops would neither forego any of their claims, nor permit advisable alterations. A Bill for "restraining bishops and others of the clergy in holy orders for inter-

meddling in secular affairs," was lost in the Lords, and this necessitated still more stringent proceedings for the entire abolition of episcopacy. Whilst this question was in debate, Bills passed both Houses for abolishing the courts of High Commission, and the Star Chamber. To these, as in the case of the Petition of Right, the king refused his assent till alarmed into compliance. This was natural. Concession was no part of the Stuart creed; and Charles loved despotism too well to part readily with so subservient an instrument as he had found in prelacy; whilst the demolition of these two unparalleled tribunals—this double-handed sword of Divine right and priestcraft—these courts of inquisition, which, as Selden said, "had no beginning in the laws of Englishmen," was, indeed, a weakening and a lessening, irreconcilable with the lust of dominion and power.

Another masterstroke of this extraordinary Parliament had been the impeachment of Laud and Strafford; and new evidence had been afforded to the nation of the inherent duplicity of the king, by the conspiracy, discovered to the House by Pym, to bring up the army which had been raised against the Scots, in order to overawe the two Houses of Parliament, and liberate the "grand apostate." But this plot had failed. Strafford had suffered, Laud was in the Tower, and the king now gone to Scotland to undo what he and Laud had hitherto done with regard to episcopacy. It had been enforced till the people had risen in rebellion—now simply to serve his own purpose, to crush the rising liberties of the still more hated English Parliament, he abolished episcopacy, and declared "that the government of the Church by bishops and archbishops *was contrary to the Word of God.*" The Irish massacre, which was not without the privity of the English court, if, indeed, not instigated by the queen and her popish emissaries, filled up the interval till the king's return in the end of November. This return alarmed the whole country, increased the popular dislike of the queen, and the Commons, turning themselves into a Committee of the whole House, appointed the train-bands of Westminster to guard them from the insults of the vagrant soldiers about the Court, and to secure themselves from such other designs as they had good cause to suspect. But, immediately upon his return, the king ordered the train-bands away, assuring the Commons that its suspicion of plots and massacres was imaginary; and, by dismissing the Earl of Leicester, whom the Commons had authorized to raise forces for the protection of Irish Protestants—by receiving a deputation of Irish Catholics, and by stopping the parliamentary supplies on their way to Chester, widened the breach between himself and the people still further. The celebrated remonstrance had been prepared, and was now presented to the king at Hampton Court. It was a masterly production. It severely and elaborately reviewed the king's misgovernment in Church and State, and laid down not only such grievances as for which redress had been already extorted, as for those which remained. Its most significant allusion was to the prelates and the House of

Lords. "And now what hope have we but in God," said these patriots, "when the only means of our subsistence and power of reformation is under Him in the Parliament. But what conjunctions can we expect there, when the bishops and recusant lords are so numerous and prevalent that they are able to cross and interrupt our best endeavours for reformation, and by that means give advantage to this malignant party to traduce our proceedings? They infuse into the people that we mean to abolish all Church government, and leave every man to his own fancy for the service and worship of God. . . . We confess our intention is, and our endeavours have been, to reduce within bounds that exorbitant power which the prelates have assumed unto themselves, so contrary both to the Word of God and the laws of the land ;—to which end we passed the Bill for removing them from their temporal power and employments, that so the better they might with meekness apply themselves to the discharge of their functions, which Bill themselves opposed, and were the principal instruments of crossing it. And we do here declare, that it is far from our purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the Church, to leave *private persons* or *particular congregations* to take up what form of Divine service they please, for *we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order* which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God."* We see thus early the prevalence of the Presbyterian idea of uniformity—that rock on which the liberties of the nation were wrecked, and the narrow views of religious liberty entertained by the majority, although Cromwell was one of the most zealous promoters of the remonstrance.

A collision was now inevitable. For in addition to removing the guard from the two Houses, the king maintained the right of the bishops to sit in Parliament against a petition from the Commons to the contrary ; and in his answer to the remonstrance declared that he would not allow exemption to tender consciences, only on condition that "The peace of the kingdom be not disturbed, nor the present decency and conveniences of God's service established in the Church, discountenanced ; nor the pious, sober, and devout actions of those reverend persons, who were the first labourers in the blessed Reformation be scandalized and defamed."† A step was now taken, both memorable and irrecoverable. It was illegal from beginning to end. Blood had already been shed round Westminster Hall, and the Commons were necessitated to debate with halberds in their hands, for the king, as we have seen, had refused their petition for a guard, and there is but little doubt that he had been for some time waiting the favourable moment of regaining his authority by force. Failing to accuse them in the House of Lords, or to arrest them by means of the serjeant-at-arms, he resorted to armed force to seize the five patriot members so

* Parl. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 961–962.

† Rushworth, vol. i. p. 456.

obnoxious to him. But the House was already forewarned : Pym, by the Countess of Carlisle, and the House by a Captain Langrish, who, passing Whitehall, had seen the guard arming. The members were instantly dismissed. One of them, Mr. Stroud, not yielding ready obedience, till pulled out by what Rushworth calls his "ancient



CHARLES I. TAKING THE SPEAKER'S CHAIR.

acquaintance." At this moment the king entered New Palace Yard, and as he went on through Westminster Hall, those attending him made a lane through which he passed and "came up the stairs of the House of Commons." Of all the scenes this place of the Commons' assembly had witnessed since it had been devoted to such use,

from the time of the Reformation, none was more extraordinary than this. Would a painter evoke the visible spirits of Liberty and Despotism meeting face to face—one calm and potent in the knowledge of its advancing and immortal strength ; the other irascible, decrepit, impotent with rage, and groping like the blind in the dark for a power which was gone for ever ; the materials lie to his hand in this unparalleled scene. It was the last throes of besotted, absolute power—

“Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame,
To find itself not matchless.”

The king advancing up the room, looked round for the great object of his hate, but missing Pym, went towards the Speaker. “By your leave, Mr. Speaker,” he said, “I must borrow your chair a little.” He then passed on to the step of the chair, and addressing the Speaker, said, “That he had expected obedience to his message, yesterday, and not an answer.” The Speaker very justly replied, “That he had neither eyes nor tongue to say or see anything but what the House commanded.” The king answered by saying, “He thought his own eyes as good as his,” the Speaker’s, “but that the birds were flown. Though he expected the House would send them to him, for their treason was foul . . .” “He then went out,” says Hatsell, “putting off his hat till he came to the door.” The unmistakable words of “privilege, privilege,” sounding in his ears as he passed down the staircase, and along the Hall, which the next time he was destined to visit under such altered circumstances. The House immediately adjourned.

From this hour the link which bound the king and the people together was riven. There was now no mistaking the character and purposes of this naked and unparalleled despotism. Even the royalists stood aghast, whilst the opinion of the people was shown by the fact that on the day of the re-assembling of the House, the impeached members were conveyed from the City to Westminster by water, in a sort of splendid triumph. The king, to avoid any insult from the populace, had left Whitehall the day previous.

The Bill concerning the bishops’ votes was now passed, though assent was rather wrung from, than acceded to by the king. But the hierarchy had so contributed to its own downfall, by its pride and ambition, its intolerance and irreligion, as to cause immense rejoicings upon the passing of the Bill ; “Though if all these things had not concurred in a nice and critical juncture of affairs, the attempt of the House of Commons would have been in vain ; neither the king nor peers being heartily willing to deprive them of their seat in Parliament.”* Yet it was an act just in principle, and proved beneficial in result. “By divesting the ministers of religion of temporal

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 123.

dignity and senatorial rank, it deprived them only of that which had been their weakness, and a cause of their corruption, whilst it left them to pursue, with undistracted mind, the more appropriate duties of their vocation." *

On the refusal of the king to place the power of the militia into the hands of the Parliament, the civil war broke out, the king erecting his standard at Nottingham, on the 25th of August, 1642. It has been a controversial question as to those upon whom rests the responsibility of first hostilities. It can be no question whatsoever. It rests with that tyrannous spirit of despotism, which, without compassion, feeling, or a sense of right or justice, had trampled on every civil and religious liberty. On this, a hideous concentration of pride and selfishness, and on this alone, rests the ominous responsibility. All the measures of the Parliament are not to be defended ; but let us recollect the provocation and the peril ; and well remember that " Whatever of political freedom exists, either in Europe or in America, has sprung directly or indirectly from those institutions which they secured and reformed. We never turn to the annals of those times without feeling increased admiration of the patriotism, the energy, the decision, the consummate wisdom, which marked the measures of that great Parliament, from the day on which it met to the commencement of civil hostilities." †

It is not our purpose to enter into the proceedings of the civil war. Its temporizing character, till the passing of the self-denying ordinance in April, 1645, was a gigantic oversight ; there was a fear of bringing the king too low ; and, but for the conduct of Fairfax and Cromwell, it must have ended in the re-establishment of despotism. It also, in a minor degree, led to the bringing in the Scots army, and all the contingents of presbyterianism and the Covenant.

Intent upon blessing England with Kirk-discipline, and declaring " That the liberties of England and Scotland must stand and fall together," the Scots, through their commissioners, were soon upon the scene of action, professing " brotherly kindness " to the English Parliament, and intent upon the downfall of episcopacy in order, as Burnet says, to set up presbytery. Subsequently they advise in a letter to the Parliament, " An uniformity of Church government," intimate that " their form of Church government by presbyters is *jure Divino*," and suggest " an assembly of godly and learned divines." The propositions of the Parliament to the king at this period were excellent, as far as civil matters went, but one or two of them, in respect to religion, prove how imperfect were the prevalent notions of what constituted religious liberty, and how heterogeneously were mixed up the spiritual and abstract questions of religion, and the moral ones relating to society. They demanded, " That the laws in force against Jesuits, priests, and popish recusants, be strictly put in

* Price, Hist. of Nonconformity, vol. ii. p. 224.

† Macaulay's Essays, vol. i. p. 131.

execution, without any toleration or dispensation to the contrary ;” and suggested that a Bill be drawn “for the education of the children of Papists by Protestants in the Protestant religion !”

Episcopacy fell. An Act for the utter abolition of the hierarchy passed the House on September 10th, 1642, though it did not come fully into operation till the November of the following year. An ordinance of the same year called together the Assembly of Divines. At this stage of the proceedings, when all coercive power had been wrested from the hands of a State clergy, how well it would have been if religious discipline had been left unfettered, and the leaders in Parliament had proceeded solely with the duties of their civil charge. But “the propriety of parliamentary enactments in the aid of religion was yet universally admitted, and the best friends of the latter consequently directed their efforts to a more equitable and Christian-like administration of church affairs. Instead of relinquishing the power of interference as an unwarrantable and injurious assumption, they sought to remedy the evils which had occurred from the vicious administration of Laud, and infuse a more vigorous and healthy tone into the frame of the hierarchy. They thus became the instruments of important benefits to the nation ; but these benefits were temporary, and were more than counterbalanced by the mischievous consequences which speedily ensued. Had the patriots of the day taken another step in advance of the public mind, by enfranchising Christianity from the degrading trammels of a state alliance, they would have increased a hundredfold their claims on the admiration and gratitude of mankind. Subsequent evils would thus have been avoided, religion would have been preserved from a thousand reproaches, and the achievement, now reserved for some future day, would have crowned with yet brighter glory this illustrious period of our history.”*

The time which was made to elapse between the passing of the Episcopal Bill, and its period of operation, proves how greatly the majority in Parliament were desirous of an accommodation with the king. But wilfully bent on regaining what he considered his prerogative and Divine right, thoroughly insincere and blind to his position, Charles soon allowed the time for temporizing to pass by. A senseless iconoclasm followed this triumph of the Puritans ; and in the retaliative spirit, inconsistent with Christianity, but incident to all assumptions of power, much misery fell upon many worthy and admirable men. We do not close our eyes to this ; the error was in the system, in the venue being changed from hand to hand, instead of being taken from both, and enfranchised Christianity left to her own vital resources for support and aid.

An ordinance for convening the Assembly of Divines soon followed on the abolition of episcopacy. The Assembly’s first sitting took place on the 1st July, 1643, and a few days afterwards, a deputation, amongst whom was Sir Henry Vane, Mr. Nye, and

* Price, *Hist. of Nonconformity*, vol. ii. p. 170.

Mr. Marshall, proceeded to Edinburgh to solicit the presence of the Scots' Commissioners in the Assembly, and their assistance in the doubtful condition of the war. This negotiation was the result of Presbyterian influence both in and without the Houses of Parliament, and was necessitated by the adverse state of public affairs; but there can be no question that it was a fatal step, and against the better judgment of the great party desirous of toleration. Had Cromwell held the sword from the beginning of the war, this necessity would not have arisen, but the defeat of Waller, the surrender of Bristol, the vacillation of Essex in the summer of this year, had brought low the fortunes of the Parliament, whilst the Scots, bent on their beloved uniformity, were sure to demand full weight and measure in return. The event proved this.

The negotiations ended in a compromise—that of the Solemn League and Covenant. By this instrument it was stipulated that “the Protestant religion should be sustained in Scotland, according to the forms already established;” while “the reformation in England should be effected agreeably to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches.” These terms were the best either party could secure for itself; and both, we may be sure, trusted to the course of events to clear up to their satisfaction what was now left equivocal.

The instructions given to the commissioners sent to the Assembly at Westminster, “to promote the *extirpation* of popery, prelacy, heresy, schism, scepticism, and idolatry,” prove the amount of bigoted intolerance added to the deliberations of that great convocation, by the presence of the Scots' divines and commissioners. Nor can less be said of the imposition of the Covenant itself. It was a new test, a new badge of slavery upon the English, all of whom above the age of eighteen were ordained to take it, and it was made the necessary test previous to all appointments, whether clerical, civil, or military.

As we consider that but few of the proceedings of the Assembly of Divines “halloed the spot,” whether it were Henry VII.'s Chapel, or the Jerusalem Chamber, we shall be brief on the subject, though prolixity was the most observable characteristic, with the exception of intolerance, of its proceedings. It spent the first ten weeks in discussing the Thirty-nine Articles. It was still proceeding, when the two Houses of Parliament bid it give its attention to the subjects of discipline and a directory of worship. Their debates commenced again on the subject of ordination; again its proceedings had to be hastened by parliamentary reminder. Thus hastened, they passed from the doctrinal point of ordination, to its manner; and when, at length, a report was presented to Parliament, it was refused by the Assembly on its return, because Parliament had thought fit to make certain alterations so as to render it less obnoxious to the leading sectaries. There were other embarrassments and hindrances to the Assembly's proceedings. “The five dissenting brethren,” as they were called, and a

few Independents amongst the lay assessors, greatly crossed their progress towards uniformity. This small minority, easily outvoted, had then recourse to the press, and published their "Apologetical Narration." It was an admirable performance, so far as its principles went, and was drawn up by the "five dissenting brethren" themselves, viz. Philip Nye, Thomas Goodwin, D.D., Syrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, and William Bridge. They pleaded for toleration, yet not for equality of religious liberty. They considered the Church answerable to the civil magistrate; that the authority of the magistrate might "back the sentence" of Churches refusing communion with "Churches miscarrying," and they expressed their willingness, as members of the Assembly, to yield as far as "light and conscience" would permit to the decisions of that body respecting questions of discipline. "Thus these five men, in respect to the great principles of civil and religious liberty, were far behind many who had no summons to attend the meetings of the convocation."* Yet, imperfect as it was, it was light thrown upon the bigoted religious adjudications of the Presbyterians, and from this time we may date the great progress of the more tolerant views of the Independents, though Presbyterianism was yet in the ascendant.

We must sum up the result of the Assembly's debates and proceedings in the cause of uniformity and presbytery. They suppressed the liturgy, forbade the use of the Common Prayer-Book, in public or private, under a penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten pounds for the second, and for the third a year's imprisonment. They published a directory for public worship, and imposed a fine of forty shillings on all ministers who failed to use it, and a fine of five pounds on all who opposed or brought it into contempt. They put down the observance of Christmas, and fined all "who," as they said, "profaned the Sabbath," however necessary or innocent the acts constituting such "profanation" might be. It is useless to specify further their narrow ordinances, and their short-sighted bigotry, in which they went so far as to claim a Divine right for their Church government, and, consequently, till negatived by the Parliament, independence from control. They denied the power of the Independents to form separate congregations, they persecuted the Baptists, and they fulminated, in all the spirit of the Vatican, their measures of imprisonment and death against the "heresies" of Socinianism, Quakerism, free will, and so on. The committee of accommodation, suggested by Cromwell, proved fruitless; the small measure of toleration claimed was denied, and its debates were closed by one of the ablest Independents declaring that "while men think there is no way of peace but by forcing all men to be of the same mind; while they think the civil sword is an ordinance of God to determine all controversies of divinity, and that it must needs be attended with fines and imprisonment to the disobedient; while they apprehend

* Fletcher's Hist. of Independency, vol. iv. p. 29.

there is no medium between a strict uniformity and a general confusion of all things ; while these sentiments prevail, there must be a base subjection of men's consciences to slavery, a suppression of much truth and great disturbances in the Christian world." * Such was the use of religious despotism by the once oppressed. Power had but changed hands. Presbyterianism was as bigoted as episcopacy, and its alliance with the State as pernicious in result.

From the passing of the self-denying ordinance and the new modelling of the army, victory was on the side of the Parliament. These triumphs it is no purpose of ours to record. Coexistent with them were the civil struggles of the two contending powers, the Presbyterians and the Independents, till both succumbed to a power still greater—that of the army. Violence is not just in principle, or lasting in effect—military violence least so of all. It effected changes at this time ; it crushed Presbyterian insolence under foot—it brought the king to the block—both of them triumphs which proved unsalutary ; for an expurgated House could not be said to represent national opinion, nor was the cause of liberty advanced at the price of blood. We think Charles a bad man and a worthless king ; he tampered with all principles and all opinions, and was faithful to none. His supposed attachment to the Church of England is a popular fable ; nor was he its martyr. In leading him to the block, a great political solecism was committed—the very fact of his dying a violent death, made, as Macaulay says, "Charles dangerous." It was the only thing that could. Henceforth, "his subjects began to love his memory as heartily as they had hated his person ; and posterity has estimated his character from his death rather than his life." † Reaction was inevitable, and "the day," says Godwin, "that saw Charles perish on the scaffold rendered the restoration of his family certain." As an abstract question, however, and at a period when all mere contingent results have passed away, there may be much truth in the great statesman Fox's opinion, that "it is much to be doubted whether his trial and execution have not, as much as any other circumstance, served to raise the character of the nation in the opinion of Europe in general." ‡ "Truly," says Carlyle, "this action of the English regicides did in effect strike a damp like death through the heart of flunkeyism universally in this world. Whereof flunkeyism, cant, cloth-worship, or whatsoever ugly name it bear, has gone about irrecoverably sick ever since, and is now at length in these generations very rapidly dying." §

The Commonwealth, which had virtually existed from the summer of 1642, was now avowed rather than established. Presbyterianism was maintained in form, though stripped of all coercive power, and it is probable much more would have been effected, and religion left to her own vital resources, but for the hostile bigotry of the

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 381.

‡ Hist. of James II. p. 16.

† Macaulay, Essays, vol. i. p. 170.

§ Carlyle, Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 444.

professors of this creed. Nothing could disarm their hostility, nothing conciliate them, and as recipients of the wages of the State, they were as much fixtures as the Episcopalians had been. The peace of the kingdom, or the well-being of their countrymen, were as nothing to them in comparison with an uniformity of religion, enforced, if need be, by the sword of the magistrate; and they thus laid the foundation of future sufferings for themselves and others. The fault was not so much with the men as with the system; it was evil in principle, and its contingents were necessarily the same.

Cromwell, on embarking for Ireland, had recommended to the Parliament the removal of all penal laws relating to religion, and Fairfax and his council of officers reiterated the same request. It was attended to. The obnoxious laws against religion, passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were consequently repealed; but subsequent ordinances relating to questions of morality, and what were called "blasphemous and execrable opinions," were not conceived in the same spirit of liberality. People are not to be made moral by Acts of Parliament; and within the limits of these so-called "execrable opinions" were included Socinianism and Quakerism! In our idea—perhaps it is a bold one—we do not think one human being has a right to denounce or stigmatize the opinions of another as either "pernicious" or "execrable." For history teaches us that the heresies of one age become the orthodoxies of another, and human judgment is too fallible to pronounce the verdict either of "right" or "wrong." If we are full of virtue, faith, and religion ourselves, charity will surely guide our judgment upon others.

Raised still higher on the tide of his wonderful fortunes by his Irish and Scotch campaigns, and the battle of Worcester, Cromwell became now the Dictator of the country. We do not think his dissolution of the Long Parliament less a tyranny than Charles's attempt to seize the five members; only there is this to say, that the noble soldier was a sincere lover of his country; her glory and her honour were the great ambitions of his life, Paradox as it may seem, he was a despot for her sake. Once in power he abrogated self. On the other hand, the Rump Parliament did not represent the nation, and the Council of State was little other than an oligarchy; its administration was splendid, but the desire to perpetuate the Parliament at length became a vice, though placed to the charge of prudential motives. Perfect in its foreign administration, the Government was less so at home. It needed, as Vane said, new institutions based on the principles of the old—the need of all transition periods of Government, but tenacious of power, it fell. Parliament should have been dissolved at a still earlier period; when that illustrious assembly had completed all they originally undertook. "All that remained," says Mr. Godwin, "to complete their glory, was for them to put an end to their authority, and tranquilly to deliver up their power into the hands of their successors." "And this, as it appears to me,"

adds the eloquent historian of these great statesmen, "would not only have completed their glory, but in all human probability assured the Commonwealth's safety. In such peculiar cases, in the circumstances of such a change in the form of the Government, *accomplished, be it observed . . .* more would have been gained by trusting the people than by distrusting them."* The same course remained open to Cromwell after the dissolution of the Long Parliament; but here he failed—where Hampden, forgetful of all things but true policy, would, had he been upon the scene, have proved his keener foresight and higher statesmanship.

But Cromwell's use of power was of no common kind. Little injustice or austerity would have marked it, if the Republicans, Royalists, and Presbyterians, would have ceased their blind agitation. The Republicans had tried their principles of government and found them adverse to the opinions of the great body of the people; and the Presbyterians might have been well content with the full toleration of their opinions, and with the revenues of the Church secured to them. But they shut their eyes till the day of repentance came.

A still wider toleration marked the period of the Protectorate. It was limited to the principles of Christianity, from which popery and prelacy were excluded—the religious meetings of the Episcopalians were, however, connived at—but within these limits coercion ceased. These were narrow enough; but Cromwell could not break wholly with the Presbyterians. His own views went further—witness his noble kindness to the Piedmontese—witness the fulness of that toleration which would have included the Jews, and given them civil and religious rights. All his speeches were characterised by this love of religious liberty so far as was then understood. "Is it ingenious," he asked, in dismissing one of his bigoted Parliaments, "to ask liberty and not to give it? What greater hypocrisy for those who were oppressed by the bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves as soon as the yoke is removed?" In this new oppression the Independents were not without a share; their conduct to the Quakers throughout the whole period of the Protectorate was much to their discredit—their best historian allows this—they were intolerant to the Friends when Cromwell would have liberated them from their prisons, and permitted their meetings. They went further, and did that which Milton said was incompatible—"independency and State hire." A few took livings, a larger number accepted of office in the universities; but we may learn at various sources, religion was not benefited by the alliance with power, no more at their instance than at others. They should have kept aloof from union with the State, even under the rule of him who was their great friend and leader.

The time for condemning Cromwell as a knave, a hypocrite, a tyrant, a usurper, is

* Forster's Lives, vol. iv. p. 130.

gone by. He committed the grave error of assuming a power, which belonging legitimately to no man, derogates from the worth, if it does not in the abstract corrupt its assumers. He was a king by the right of nature, an unfictitious king, as countless other Englishmen of large heart and brain have been. Being this, he wanted not to be "Lord Protector" or "Highness;" titles were out of place for him, whom nature had made the greatest of his generation. Yet detracting all we may from his extraordinary personal merit and the felicity of his pre-eminent rule, his name will be ever honoured by his thoughtful countrymen; and "Oliver's days" will be long a tradition in the land, though for the present his statue is denied a niche in "high places." When legislative enactments shall be shaped out by a specially trained and highly cultivated order of intellect; when to accept or reject these, we have a better educated people; when restraints are even more rigid than at present to shield us from the interference of an uneducated democracy, or the bigotries of aristocratic or sectarian narrowness—then will the generations read history, and venerate to the full the memory of their great statesman and soldier—whom God, not man, had made a potentate.

He died in the fulness of his power and fame, "leaving," as Carlyle says, "a great scene of World-history in this old Whitehall." But little of this old Whitehall remains, saving the Banqueting House, which has few associations pertaining to Oliver. Rather those belonging to the gaudy apotheosis, and the ignoble scenes Pepys and Evelyn describe. Two great fires in the reign of William and Mary destroyed the whole palace, with the exception of the Banqueting House. Other conflagrations, since then, have taken from us St. Stephen's Chapel, and the fragments of the grand old palace of our ancient kings. The old chapel was an incalculable loss. England and Englishmen could ill spare the venerable and splendid associations which connected themselves with the old House of Commons; and the liberties vindicated there by a Hampden, an Eliot, a Vane. Yet something remains to us: *we have those liberties themselves*, consecrated alike by time and usage. Best shall we consecrate them anew, best shall we reverence the ancient scene, the "hallowed spot," by dedicating our individual duties, aspirations, and endeavours, however humbly, weakly, or indirectly, to the same "immortal cause."

CHAPTER VIII.

BREAD STREET; ALDERSGATE STREET; PETTY FRANCE; AND CRIPPLEGATE.—
PRELACY AND LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

CHEAPSIDE and its diverging streets abound in associations ; historic, literary, civic, and domestic. But there is one of still larger interest to the thoughtful ; and this relating to the mighty tide of human life which now for centuries has swept along this thoroughfare. A tide rarely ceasing ; yet made up of infinite human souls, which doubtless for the major part did brave and noble work for its kind ; building up the stratas of civilization, till we, the generations of to-day, take our turn to be actors and improvers. We are called—and let us do our service well ! Let us enrich that ever moving throng—that wave of the great ocean of eternity, with higher knowledge, higher purpose, higher faith, and it will flow on to still more potential ends, both physical and moral. Believe it ! our destiny is a sublime one if we could behold its issues ; and the time may come, when, by a general culture of intelligence, and a conservation of virtues and principles, streams of human life, such as this ever thronging through Cheapside, may be purified from evil and selfishness to a degree, which to specify, would possibly raise a smile in all but the few who, through knowledge, are cognizant of the physical and moral ascension man has already slowly made. These are wholesome thoughts—fit to be well remembered as we approach the “hallowed spot” where he was born, who did so much to show virtue in her “highest mood ;” who scorned tyranny, pride, and wilful ignorance ; who pleaded for the freedom of the press ; and did such service, by his incomparable writings, for the religious liberty of England. The place is Bread Street—the man, John Milton.

From a charter, quoted in “*Londini Illustrata*,” we learn, that a few years previously to 1290, when the Cross was set up by King Edward I. in memory of his queen, Cheapside, or at least a part of it, was an open field ; called in 1246 “Crown field,” from a hostelry at its east end, bearing that sign. This field must have been on the northern side ; * for on the southern, the remains constantly found prove that the Roman city had covered this site ; and the Normans likewise building in this direction, had raised a noble church, on the site of the present Bow Church, as early

* In 1419, seventh year of Henry V. a great portion of the northern side of Chepe, or Cheapside, was then open ground.—*Liber Albus*, Note, p. 23.

as the reign of the Conqueror. An important thoroughfare like this was soon sure to be lined by houses, and in a few years after the erection of its beautiful Cross, Cheapside was celebrated for its booths of merchandize, and in course of time for its conduit and its standard. An old print attached to one of the rare maps of London in the British Museum, shows Cheapside to have been anciently wider than it is at present; and the middle of the street raised above its level, was railed in on either side, wherein were paths parallel with the ground-floors of the overhanging houses, as may yet be seen in Chester and some of the old towns on the Welch borders. Without these rails, "ridings," that is, tournaments and jousts, were held in the presence of royalty, who occupied on these occasions a sort of shed or balcony erected outside Bow Church, and which remained there, more or less in its original condition, till the church was burnt down in the Fire of London.

Bread Street—"so called," says Stow, "in old time from bread there sold," and this as early as 1302—was, in the early part of the seventeenth century chiefly occupied by rich merchants. In it also were "divers fair inns," for the use of travellers and carriers to the City. It has been surmised by the biographers of Milton, that the house in which he was born was a "garden house." This surmise is, we think, borne out by Aggas's plan, if the accuracy of the old delineator may be relied on. Entering Bread Street from Cheapside in those old days—we must recollect the Cross stood hereabouts in the great thoroughfare—we find the corner house on our left hand is large and has a court or garden attached to it. Behind this, again, is a considerable space of ground—which, in addition to a narrow lane, stretches as far as Bow Church. Then come houses, again, with the contingent court or garden; in one of which—the sign above it being the Spread Eagle, the armorial bearings of his family—John Milton was born the ninth of December, 1608, between the hours of six and seven in the morning. The church of All Hallows, Bread Street, was but a few doors off on the same side the way: and herein, eleven days after birth, he was baptized, the following being entered in the parish register:—

"The XX daye of Dec 1608 was baptized John
the sonne of John Mylton. Scrivener."

We can fancy the Christmas kept with unusual festivities—it was not yet proscribed—for this advent of the first-born son; of whom was assuredly much care, for it was "winter wild," and this amid sweet presagings for the future, though they knew it not, that—

"At his birth a star
Unseen before in heaven proclaims him come."*

Of the old church of All Hallows, Bread Street, little is known, as it was burnt

* Paradise Lost, book xii.

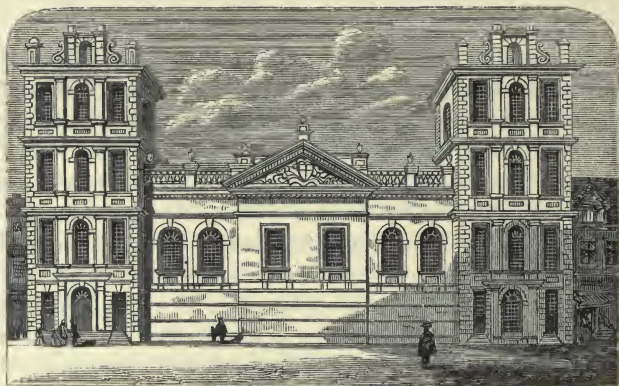
down in the Great Fire, and rebuilt by Wren. There was also another church, that of St. Mildred, on the same side of the way, which shared in the same disaster and the same re-edification. The sheriffs of London had their comptor or prison in this street till 1555, when it was removed to Wood Street; here also stood the Mermaid Tavern, celebrated in the verse of both Ben Jonson and Francis Beaumont.* Nor will it be inappropriate to mention, though referred to elsewhere, that in a house in this street was stored the larger portion of the fine library of Dr. Thomas Goodwin, when all was turned to ashes in the Great Fire. He preached his celebrated sermon, "Patience its Perfect Work," on the occasion, and ceased his scholarly regret when he remembered that his theological books yet remained. Here, also, in All Hallows, soon after its rebuilding, was buried the pious John Howe.

Milton's parents seem both to have been worthy of such a son. His mother's charity and goodness he himself records in his immortal "Second Defence," and from her he seems to have derived his head-aches and weak sight. "His father," says old Aubrey, "read without spectacles at eighty-four. His mother had very weak eyes, and used spectacles presently after she was thirty years old." The elder Milton had studied at Christ Church, Oxford, but finding, as Aubrey tells, "a bible in English in his chamber," he upon the reading of it became convinced of the fallacy of the Popish doctrines, and, abruptly quitting the university, came to London and adopted—after due instruction from a friend—the profession of a scrivener, a valuable one in that day. His relaxation was music, for which he had an exquisite taste and great talent. He "composed many songs now in print," says Aubrey, "especially that of Oriana, and got a plentiful estate by it, and left it off many years before he died." Is it possible that Milton's father, after all, made his substance by his skill in musical composition, or is it old Aubrey's bad grammar? We suspect the latter. Still it may have been a source of some profit. For the composition of a song in fourteen parts the Landgrave of Hesse sent him, adds Aubrey, "a meddall of gold as a noble present." Oriana was a sort of masque, and was the joint composition of the elder Milton and two or three more, the eighteenth part being his, and of great beauty. It was probably composed some years previous to the great poet's birth, as it was in honour of Queen Elizabeth, flattering her under the title of a fair young shepherdess, though she was then toothless and wrinkled. His sacred music was also excellent; some of it is in use at this day; and we may fancy, whilst he sat at his organ blending together these exquisite melodies, the young boy Milton lingering in some window-seat or nook close by, a listener to the "linked sweetness long drawn out," yet wrapt in dreams that were to have an immortal music of their own.

Milton's genius was encouraged by his father. Previously to entering St. Paul's

* Cunningham, p. 332.

School, at the age of fifteen—there is some reason to think it was much earlier—he was instructed by masters at home, one of whom was a Puritan, named Thomas Young, who, according to Aubrey, “cutt his haire short,” an example at least not copied by Milton. His locks were flowing and of wonderful beauty; and in this, as in other things, we trace that fusion of the aristocratic and democratic tendencies so peculiar to Milton, and so finely touched upon by Macaulay. In him were combined the best qualities of Cavalier and Puritan. His high organism embraced the two constituents of truth and beauty; he was in himself a specimen of that high race which we believe eventual civilization and education will produce—a race combining qualities hitherto rarely blended—democratic purity and simplicity, and aristocratic love of art and excellence.



ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

Whilst quite a boy Milton commenced his severe studies. “He sat up very late,” says Aubrey, “commonly till twelve or one o’clock at night, and his father ordered the mayd to sitt up for him, and in those years (10) composed many copies of verses which might well become a riper age.” This privilege was a mistaken one on the part of the elder Milton. The rein and not the spur should have been used. He was by this time, too, a voracious reader, borrowing books of Humphrey Lownes, a neighbour and bookseller, or, as some say, printer. In this way he became acquainted with Spenser and Sylvester’s writings, and with passionate enthusiasm revelled in the beauties of the “Faerie Queene.”

We fancy we see the boy on his way to school, with those golden locks and fair English face; passing by Watling Street, Old Change, and so to St. Paul’s School

(the nearest way by Aggas's plan). The school itself was full of relevant associations for one whose views were to be antagonistic to prelatic pomp, luxury, and religious abuses. It had been founded in 1512 by the friend of Erasmus, Dean Colet, who was one of the first to see that education would be an invincible weapon in the coming combat against Popery. He was also distinguished by his severe and searching discipline in the Church; by his diligent preaching, his fearlessness of opinion, his contempt for the abuses of religious houses, his dislike of Prelacy, and more than all, by his inclination to the principles of the Reformation. There was a thought of distinguishing him by a martyrdom in Smithfield, but he escaped to found this school, and enjoy further years of delightful friendship with Latimer, Linaere, the great physician, Lily, whom he made first master of his school, and the great Sir Thomas More. But to the end of his useful life he was obnoxious to the London clergy, one of whom called his school "a house of idolatry," because the Latin poets were taught therein. Though thus stigmatized, it reared great men: Milton, Calamy, and Marlborough. Pepys was also a scholar, but he was *not* great.

In his seventeenth year Milton proceeded to Cambridge. It is not for us to pursue his academic life or studies, stated, as both have been, by many able pens. It is enough to say that he took his two degrees of bachelor and master of arts, and that whilst there, he gave up his early purpose of service in the Anglican Church, "perceiving what tyranny had invaded" it, and finally left the University with a name and foreshadow of greatness which Dr. Johnson's calumnies, in after years, could not tarnish.

Upon leaving the University he repaired to Horton in Buckinghamshire, where his father had settled with a competency some while before; and here, surrounded by the peace of nature; the winds, the waving woodlands, the song of birds enriching the melodious airs his fingers touched upon organ or viol, he pursued a studious life. Pity to say, the old Horton house is gone. Ruthless hands swept away this "Muses' bower," some seventy years or so ago.

Here for five years Milton continued his noble studies, and laid the foundation of his poetic excellence and fame. "Born in the city," says one who combines in his writings the beauties of Thomson, and the effects of Gainsborough, "he now made himself thoroughly familiar with nature. In the woods and parks and on the pleasant hills of this pleasant county, he enjoyed the purest delights of contemplation and poetry. Here he is supposed to have imbued himself with the allegorical romance of his favourite Spenser, and also to have written his own delightful Arcades, Comus, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, and Lycidas. It is a fact which his biographers have not seemed to perceive, but which is really significant, that the very Italian titles L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, of themselves almost identify the productions of this period and place, where he was busy with his preparations for his visit to Italy.

The county of Buckingham appeared always to be, from this time, a particular favourite with him; and no wonder, for it is full of poetical beauty, abounds with those solemn and woodland charms which are so welcome to a mind brooding over poetical subjects, and shunning all things and places that disturb. It abounds, being so near the metropolis, also with historic associations of deep interest.* There has however, been controversy on this point, Sir William Jones contending that the *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* were written at Forest-hill in Oxfordshire, and in subsequent years. But we think with Mr. Howitt, whose great knowledge of the peculiarities of English scenery renders his opinion the more valuable, that "for the reason assigned, and for that of their general spirit, . . . they were written at Horton, as there is plenty of evidence that *Comus* and *Arcades* were."† Some light is also thrown upon another debated point by this long residence in Buckinghamshire. People who write in the heart of cities, and whose knowledge of the country is chiefly derived from books, who know nothing of the buoyancy of spirit the presence of Nature begets, or of the elasticity of foot with which upland or field is trod, or how "lane and alley green," dingle and "bosky dell" lead on, or how distant points, as village, farm, and moor are considered in near neighbourhood—doubt easily the simplest facts. But reasoning from these only, it seems probable, that Milton's acquaintance, or at least, knowledge of Mary Powell commenced whilst he was a resident at Horton, or even whilst he came hither to and fro from Cambridge, as Todd, in his biography shows that some bond or other money business was settled between Mary Powell's father and the younger Milton at this period. The elder Milton, having been a scrivener, may have had previous business with the Powells, coming, as he did, from the same part of Oxfordshire, and the acquaintanceship may have been renewed when the Miltons settled at Horton. The distance between that and Forest-hill was not more than a pleasant morning's journey, which the younger Milton taking occasionally may then have seen his future wife, though the preference might not have been declared till the memorable Whitsuntide of his marriage. For he took, as we learn from himself, an occasional "gaudy day," and as he was no false ascetic, but loved grace and festivity in their due season, he avoided no more the house of a Royalist, than he did that of a graver Puritan.

His mother died, and Milton soon afterwards proceeded to Italy; remaining abroad about a year and three months, returning, as Godwin thinks, in August, 1640. Few of us can estimate at what sacrifice of taste and inclination this return must have been made. Blessed with genius, fame, youth, and beauty, his travels in that country had been a continued literary and personal ovation. Contemplating moreover a visit to Greece "to feast his fancy," as Warton says, with the feeling of a

* Howitt's *Houses and Haunts*, vol. i. p. 71.

† Ibid. p. 72.

scholar, "with the contemplation of scenes familiar to Theocritus and Homer, the fires of Etna, and the porticoes of Pericles," the sacrifice was still greater; but what were these, sacred and classic as they were, to the civil and religious liberties of his country, and such a country, too, as England? What was the contemplation of the liberties of the ages of Pericles, of those struggled for at Thermopylæ, compared to the living hope of unveiling the long-hidden face of Liberty, and placing her, with her sublime contingents, amid a nation bowed down to an Egyptian yoke by king and hierarchy? A less man would have retraced his steps; John Milton was sure to do so, with a pen mightier than the Philistine's sword, and with his hatred of religious despotism not lessened by what he had witnessed of Popery in foreign lands. We owe John Milton much, and gathered into this indebtedness is the fact, that he thus came back to help in the unbinding of our "secular chains," to help the cause of vital religion, to help the State, to help the people, and help towards the great justices of a time no man with a true English heart can think of without patriotic reverence.

He came, bringing with him many choice and rare books, and settled first at a lodging in St. Bride's Churchyard, "at the house of one Russell a taylor;"* for irrespective of the interest of the time, he had no inducements to return to Horton, his mother being dead, as we have seen, and his father now living at Reading with his younger son. In this place—St. Bride's Churchyard—Milton now undertook the education of his sister's two sons, Edward and John Philips, boys of nine and ten years old, who in after life, the younger more particularly, did so much by their base and venal writings to dishonour the precepts and example of their illustrious master.

St. Bride's Churchyard would seem to have undergone no such absolute change as some of the sites dignified by Milton's residence. The church was burnt down in the Great Fire, and replaced by the present edifice, one of Wren's master-pieces, evidently on the same site. The old church covered the ashes of Wynkin de Worde, and the poet, Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset.† Of the house "of one Russell a taylor," we have this interesting information as to its existence till a recent period, though we differ from it in thinking that though the site be correct, the actual building perished in the Great Fire, which spread, as we know, as far west as Inner Temple Lane. "It was," says Mr. Howitt, who gathered his information from an old inhabitant, "on the left hand as you proceed towards Fleet Street through the Avenue. It was a very small tenement, very old, and was burnt down on the 24th of November, 1824, at which time it was occupied by a hair-dresser. It was—a proof its age—without party walls, and much decayed. The back part of the Punch Office now occupies its site."‡ This coincidence is curious; and capable of some pregnant illustration were this the place

* Philips' *Life of Milton*. † *Cunningham*, p. 70. ‡ *Homes and Haunts*, vol. i. p. 90.

to discuss the present condition of the press with that in the time of Milton, and the tendency of our age to enlist even wit and humour, both artistic and literary, in the cause of civil rights and religious justice.

Milton soon removed hence to a commodious "garden house" he took in Aldersgate Street, then a suburban and somewhat aristocratic locality. An old map, "The Cittie of London, 1640," shows that a fair extent of open ground surrounded it, more particularly on its eastern side, the houses round the Charter House and Smithfield encroaching on the other, and on this side it is, therefore, probable Milton's house stood, "at the end of an entry," as his nephew tells us, and selected thus on account of its privacy. The gate in the City walls, then newly re-edified, was close at hand; the fields also, and Thanet House, "one of Inigo Jones's fine old mansions,"* Lauderdale House, and Peter House, used as a prison in the time of the Protectorate, diversified the uniformity and spaciousness of this, what Howell calls, "Italian street." Here, with his books about him, his garden round him—for this part of London was then, as it had been for some years, celebrated for its gardens and flowers—with the "red and white Provens rose," the clove, and "white pink," the "pansy freakt with jet," honeysuckle, sweetbriar, and southernwood, for his out-door company, within his deep-toned organ for a leisure hour, he settled down to his great duties. Probably in an early part of 1641.

The Puritanism of Milton had been of lengthened growth. It was a long evolution of opinion ascending and increasing in power till it settled in an irreconcilable hatred of all species of despotism, whether religious or civil. For what he had considered as unorthodox in his youth, he made his faith in mature years; witness that incomparable passage in the fifth book of the "Paradise Lost," in which is summed up the highest philosophic truth and reason. It is the very essence and realization of all which hope foresees in the destiny of our kind. In his "Second Defence" he says, "I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights," proving thus how early his opinions respecting the secularising of Christianity had been formed. It has been supposed that these were originally influenced by his tutor Thomas Young, who was a Nonconformist, and had suffered much for conscience' sake. But Milton's boyhood was surrounded by countless other predisposing causes to a similar view of Church questions. His father was far too intelligent to be a bigot, and in that age discussion fulfilled, in a large measure, the province of the press in this. At home, at school, abroad, such subjects as "spiritual and civil" were constantly discussed in his hearing; and with but one possible result upon a mind already imbued with the spirit of classic freedom. Nor was this merely abstract discussion. It was vitalized by national sufferings and

* Cunningham, p. 6.

national discontent, and by the proceedings of the bishops from the time of James, till crowned by the perversions of Laud, and his project that the nation should be governed by a convocation instead of a parliament. No wonder, therefore, that when "a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man, from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion . . . would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic;"* that Milton hastened to lead public opinion through a power more effective of lasting results than such as could spring from mere civil strife. The duty was distasteful to him, for he had with rapture renewed his literary pursuits; but, as he elsewhere said, in that spirit of self-abnegation which so eminently characterises all true greatness, and all true genius, "When God commands to take a trumpet and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal."†

The grand committee of religion appointed by the Parliament, had now sat some months; Laud and several of the bishops were in prison, and the loss of the bill relating to the bishops' votes in the Upper House had only increased the popular leaning towards sweeping measures, when Milton's treatise "Of Reformation in England" appeared. As in the senseless iconoclasm of the time, men mistook personality for system, visible objects for abstract ideas, and directed their retributive measures more against the bishops personally than against the system which had corrupted them, but Milton's treatise opportunely appeared, and gave a new view to the question at issue. It was to show that to secularise Christianity was to corrupt it; and that to base power, emolument, and state upon such a system could do no other than deteriorate even wise and Christian men. "It was not Episcopacy," he wrote, after speaking of our imperfect Reformation in England, and the sad shortcomings, in many instances, of men like Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, "that wrought in them the heavenly fortitude of martyrdom, as little is it that martyrdom can make good Episcopacy; but it was Episcopacy that led the good and holy men through the temptation of the enemy, and the snare of this present world, to many blameworthy and opprobrious actions. And it is still Episcopacy that before all our eyes worsens and slugs the most learned and seeming religious of our ministers, who no sooner advanced to it, but like a seething pot set to cool, sensibly exhale and reek out the greatest part of that zeal and those gifts which were formerly in them."‡ Such was Milton's deliberate opinion of the results of secularising duties essentially spiritual; transmuting, as it were, precious metal into base; and we scarcely think that two centuries' further experience has lessened its verity. Proceeding on he shows

* Second Defence, Prose Works, p. 934, edit. 1833.

† Church Government against Prelaty, Prose Works, p. 42.

‡ Of Reformation, Prose Works, p. 4.

what constitutes a true and unsecular servant of Christ's Church. "He that will mould a modern bishop into a primitive must yield him to be elected by the popular voice, undiocesed, unreverenced, unlorded, and leave him nothing but brotherly equality, matchless temperance, frequent fasting, incessant prayer and preaching, continual watching and labours in his ministry. . . . But when he steps up into the chair of pontifical pride, and changes a moderate and exemplary house for a misgoverned and haughty palace, spiritual dignity for carnal precedence, and secular high office and employment for the high negotiations of his heavenly embassy, then he degrades, then he unbishops himself; he that makes him bishop makes him no bishop." *

On the need, said to be, of religion leaning on the civil power of a State, Milton thus admirably expresses himself: "I am not of opinion to think the Church a vine, in this respect, because as they take it, she cannot subsist without clasping about the elm of worldly strength and felicity, as if the heavenly city could not support itself without the props and buttresses of secular authority." † He then proceeds in the second book of his treatise to this further question, the alliance between secular and religious principles: "Must Church government that is appointed in the Gospel, and has chief respect to the soul, be conformable and pliant to civil, that is arbitrary, and chiefly conversant about the visible and external part of man? . . . but seeing the evangelical precept forbids Churchmen to intermeddle with worldly employments, what interweavings or interworkings can knit the minister and the magistrate in their several functions to the regard of any precise correspondency? Seeing that the Churchman's office is only to teach men the Christian faith, to exhort all, to encourage the good, to admonish the bad, privately the less offender, publicly the scandalous and stubborn; to censure and separate from the communion of Christ's flock the contagious and incorrigible, to receive with joy and fatherly compassion, the penitent; all this must be done, and more than this is beyond any Church authority. What is all this either here or there, to the temporal regiment of weal public, whether it be popular, princely, or monarchical? Where doth it entrench upon the temporal governor? where does it come in his walk? where doth it make inroads upon his jurisdiction? Indeed, if the minister's part be rightly discharged, it renders him the people more conscionable, quiet, and easy to be governed; if otherwise, his life and doctrine will declare him. If, therefore, the constitution of the Church be already set down by Divine prescript, as all sides confess, then can she not be a handmaid to wait on civil commodities and respects; and if the nature and limits of Church discipline such as are either helpful to all political estates indifferently, or have no particular relation to any; then is there no necessity, nor indeed possibility, of linking the one with the other in a special conformation." ‡

The same year saw the publication of three other papers upon the great

* Of Reformation, Prose Works, pp. 6, 4.

† Ibid. p. 7.

‡ Prose Works, p. 11.

question under consideration. One a brief tract on "Prelatical Episcopacy," a longer paper, "The Reason of Church Government," and a third brief paper, "Animadversions upon the Remonstrants' Defence." It was not to be expected that the Episcopalians would suffer in silence. Accordingly, several of the more moderate divines had already taken up the cause of the Establishment and written in its defence; amongst others, Bishop Hall and Archbishop Usher. In answer to their books, Milton quickly wrote the two first treatises, one of which, that on "Prelatical Episcopacy," we may pass by, as more a controversy than a statement; but the other is graced by much of Milton's rich and peculiar diction, and with opinions in sympathy with those who, like Vane, pleaded for a root-and-branch abolition of Episcopacy. Usher had argued that Prelacy prevented schism. "But how, oh prelates, should you prevent schism?" questioned the great Puritan; "and how should you not remove and oppose all the means of removing schism? when Prelaty is a schism itself from the most reformed and most flourishing of our neighbour Churches abroad, and a sad subject of discord and offence to the whole nation at home. The remedy which you allege is the very disease we groan under, and can never be to us a remedy but by removing itself." * In the second book of "The Reason of Church Government," we catch some delightful glimpses of Milton himself, as one who "might perhaps leave something so written in after times as they (his friends) should not willingly let die." And this, "a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayers to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases." †

He then proceeds with the question of Episcopacy. After showing its opposition to the Gospel, through the assumption of ceremonies and vain-glorious pomp, Milton touches upon prelatical jurisdiction, and the tendency of such to clothe itself in State authority. "For when the Church," he says, "without temporal support is able to do her great works upon the unforced obedience of men, it argues a Divinity about her. But where she thinks to credit and better her spiritual efficacy, and to win herself respect and dread by strutting in the false vizard of worldly authority, it is evident that God is not there, but that her apostolic virtue is departed from her, and hath left her joy cold; which she perceiving, as in a decayed nature, seeks to the outward fomentations and chafings of worldly help, and external flourishes, to fetch, if it be possible, some motion in her extreme parts, or to hatch a counterfeit life with the crafty and artificial heat of jurisdiction." ‡ The operation of Episcopacy upon

* Prose Works, p. 39.

† Ibid. p. 44.

‡ Ibid. p. 47.

the State is next discussed. In relation to it Milton takes no pains to soften the severity of his opinion. Truth with him was a religion; and the proceedings of the whole hierarchy, not for a season, but many; the slavish doctrines heard in the pulpit; the embroilment of the country; and the base attempt to make the State and her liberties meanly subservient to the Church, or rather, to trample them out altogether, justified this austere judgment.

The third pamphlet we have referred to, "*Animadversions on the Remonstrants' Defence*," was an answer to another work of Bishop Hall, who had replied to a pamphlet written by five Presbyterian ministers, and entitled "*Smectymnuus*," a word formed with the initial letters of the authors' names. It was natural that at this period of great national excitement on the questions of religion, that the points debated within both Houses of Parliament should claim equal attention abroad; and that the press should be employed by the several controversialists. For the questions debated, namely, the antiquity of liturgies, and of the Episcopal order, were the very root of difference between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, and there is reason to think that the controversy might have been composed—for there were points of agreement—had the major part of the bishops shown the same spirit of concession as either Hall or Usher; "but the Court bishops would abate nothing as long as the Crown would support them; and as the Parliament increased in power, the Puritan divines stiffened in their demands, till methods of accommodation were impracticable." * Which side Milton took in his "*Animadversions*" we may be sure, though concession or compromise was not to be expected from him.

In the next year, 1642, Milton published his "*Apology for Smectymnuus*," one of the noblest of his prose works. It was rather a vindication of himself from the calumnies asserted in an anonymous pamphlet supposed to have been written by Bishop Hall's son, than an apology for the Presbyterians. Again in its pages we gain delightful glimpses of him personally. He speaks of the place he dwells in as a "suburb," and his morning haunts as where they should be, "at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring; in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labour or to devotion, in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory be its full fraught. These, with useful and generous labours, preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather than to see the ruin of our protestation, and the inforcement of a slavish life." † What beautiful thoughts these! What physical knowledge

* Neal, vol. ii. p. 35.

† Prose Works, p. 80.

they show! How aptly illustrative of his sense of what Bacon calls "the concordances between mind and body," and how both should be made subservient to the glory of God, and the good of his country! May we not also induce from this passage, that Milton's love and knowledge of flowers were not merely that of a connoisseur, but of one who could train, and plant, and tend?—that, his earlier studies over, he recruited mind and body, and prepared for fresh service by

"Rural work
Among sweet dews and flowers."*

Further onward we have this noble idea as to the foundation on which literary duties and character should rest. "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to unite well hereafter in laudable things, *ought himself to be a true poem*; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." An opinion in which we religiously believe; and that literary service, as the highest service which can dignify the human acceptor, can only be fulfilled by a life which shall be the pattern of the work; a sacrifice to truth, an offering for human good!

In the summer of the following year, 1643, Milton married. "About Whitsuntide it was, or a little after, that he took a journey into the country, nobody about certainly knowing the reason, or that it was any more than a journey of recreation. After a month's stay, home he returns a married man that went out a bachelor." The newly married pair were accompanied home by the "bride's nearest relations," and there was feasting held for some days in celebration of the nuptials. The relations then departed, and in a month were followed by the bride herself, who was by this time tired of what Philips calls "a philosophical life." Her subsequent refusal to return, and Milton's natural resentment at her contumacy, are matters too well known to need repetition. She was undoubtedly, from this and other evidence which remains on record, a woman wholly unfitted to be the wife of such a man; and Milton, with what seems to be a fatality incident to poets, had chosen ill. A woman of a higher mould should have been his, who, at once educated and refined, obedient and orderly, home-staying and affectionate, would and could have revered the lofty intellect and eminent moral virtues of such a husband. For an austerity of character so begot, is a provocation rather than a repellant to devotion in the breast of a true woman.

Milton's several treatises on divorce were the result of this desertion. The subject is not one to be discussed here, though we are far from thinking that posterity

* *Paradise Lost*, b. v.

will not recur to it. Our own is not a philosophic age; but the time will undoubtedly come when the moralities will have their turn as subjects for discussion and revision. But the chief result to Milton immediately and personally was a summons before the House of Lords on the subject of his novel opinions. The Presbyterians also raised a clamour against him, and from this time Milton was no friend to the Assembly of Divines. He saw that spiritual pride and a love of spiritual despotism were as much their vice as they had been that of the Episcopalians. Religious liberty could not prosper in such hands; and perhaps from this time Milton still more clearly perceived the value of the great principles of spiritual independency.

Shortly after his marriage Milton received his excellent father beneath his roof. "The old gentleman living," says Philips, "wholly retired to his rest and devotion, without the least trouble imaginable." As time wore on, a reconciliation was effected between the injured husband and the repentant wife, in which instance, and in his subsequent magnanimous and generous conduct to her family, receiving and sheltering them beneath his roof, the beauty of Milton's character—its Christian charity, its large forgiveness, its power of raising itself superior to anything like vindictiveness—pre-eminently shines.

Previous to this event he had given to the world his "Treatise on Education," and the "Areopagitica; a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." The first we must let pass; the second, as the noblest of his prose writings, and as the sublimest plea ever penned for the cause of mental freedom, we must briefly refer to. The glory of it is Milton's own. "Thousands and tens of thousands amongst his contemporaries," says Macaulay, "raised their voices against ship-money and the Star Chamber. But there were few indeed who discussed the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves, as well as tax themselves, and should be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. . . . To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain, and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf. With a view to the same great object he attacked the licensing system, in that sublime treatise which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand, and as frontlets between his eyes." *

* *Essays*, vol. i. p. 56.

The subjugation of Prelacy achieved, and a Parliamentary majority theirs, the Presbyterians soon played the same despotic part as their predecessors. To settle the uniformity of religion, they thought no course so sure as to restrain opinion; and therefore, under the plea that it was necessary to stay the further issue of pamphlets obnoxious to the cause of the Parliament, an order was issued, June 14, 1643, "that no person or persons should print any book or pamphlet without license under the hands of such persons as should be licensed by Parliament, . . . and that all offenders against this order were to be committed to prison and punished as Parliament might direct." It was against this order that Milton's stately remonstrance was addressed. Considering "a good book" to be "the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life," he asks "if the evils of prelacy are now to light wholly upon learning," "and the pastor of a small unlearned parish on the sudden" to be "exalted archbishop over a large diocese of books, and yet not remove but keep his other cure too, a mystical pluralist. He who but of late cried down the sole ordination of every novice bachelor of art, and denied sole jurisdiction over the simplest parishioner, shall not at home in his private chair assume both these over worthiest and excellentest books, and able authors that write them. This is not, the covenants and protestations we have made! this is not to put down Prelacy; this is but to chop an Episcopacy; this is but to translate the palace metropolitan from one kind of dominion into another; this is but an old canonical slight of commuting our penance. To startle thus betimes at a mere unlicensed pamphlet, will, after a while, be afraid of every conventicle, and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting. But I am certain that a State governed by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the work of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are not yet constituted in religion that freedom of writing should be restrained by a discipline imitated from the prelates, and learned by them from the Inquisition, to shut us up all again in the breast of a licenser, must needs give cause of doubt and discouragement to all learned and religious men: who cannot but discern the fineness of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers; that while bishops were to be baited down, then all presses might be open; it was the people's birthright and privilege in time of Parliament; it was the breaking forth of light. But now the bishops abrogated and voided out of the Church, as if our reformation sought no more but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the Episcopal acts begin to bud again; the cruse of truth must run no more oil; liberty of printing must be enthralled again under a prelatie commission of twenty; the privilege of the people nullified; and which is worse, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters, all this the Parliament yet sitting."* This Presbyterian dogmatism did not, or would not see, that sect and

schism arose but from the "zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding;" it would not perceive that "a little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity, might win all these diligencies to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth;" it would not "forego this prelatial tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men;" it would not let "a noble and puissant nation rouse herself like a strong man after sleep;" nor would it see "that the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience," was "above all liberties;" nor that though "all the winds of doctrine were let loose," truth would prevail! Presbyterian bigotry would not see or know these things, and, therefore, "from a gross conforming stupidity,"* it fell, dragging with it in its descent, the most precious liberties of a great nation. Well does Milton's most logical biographer remark, that "at this crisis in the history of the Church, a right appreciation of the principles of religious freedom, and a pervading spirit of Christian candour and love, would have secured to this empire the lasting and blessed heritage of liberty of conscience and perfect ecclesiastical equality. Universal history perhaps does not record a more lamentable loss of a more precious opportunity."†

But Milton's noble and imperishable words, though inoperative then, either to convince the majority in power, or to secure the richest and best of all liberties for those of his or several succeeding generations, are, as it were, vital now; a majestic hymn ever sounding, ever proclaiming to the nation the worth of its mighty possession—a free and unlicentious press. Schoolmaster and minister in one! Legislating far more wisely than parliaments; preaching as from a million pulpits; guiding by a master's hand; loved by the people; honoured by the commonwealth;—a munificent power as all-bestowing as nature: for in its bosom lie, coming knowledge, coming truth; coming government, and the civilization that will elevate, illumine, and refine!

At the date of his reconciliation with his wife, Milton removed to a large house in the Barbican, then a short street, very narrow, and lined by picturesque gabled houses on either side with much open space behind, particularly towards the north, where gardens led away into the fields. It was on this side, that the old burgh-kenin, or watch tower, of the City stood. There were others in several parts of ancient London, but this was the most celebrated; it gave the name of Barbican to the street, and was of that height, that from it as Stow tells us "a man might behold and view the old City towards the south, and also into Kent, Sussex, and Surrey; and also every other way, east, north, and south."‡ Milton's house stood, from what we can gather, to the west of this tower; in it his two eldest daughters were born, and from it were

* Prose Works, pp. 116, 117. † John Milton, a Biography, by Cyrus R. Edmonds, p. 108.

‡ Survey, Thoms' Edit. p. 129.

buried his own father, in 1647—and his father-in-law, Richard Powell. His chief literary work here was, “The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates,” and some sonnets. He then removed, the same year as that in which his father died, to a smaller house in Holborn, opening into Lincoln’s Inn Fields. The Powells had this year left the shelter of his roof, and his removal might arise from no longer needing so large a house. Philips places the date of this removal in 1649, but it is probably a mistake. Holborn was at this point almost a suburb. On the north side, houses extended no farther than King Street; fields lay behind, and Lincoln’s Inn Fields, though built upon on the south and west, was a large open space, a few dilapidated cottages here and there contrasting with Arch Row—the work of Inigo Jones.

During the period he occupied this house in Holborn, Milton composed four books of his English History, and “Observations” on the “Manifesto of the Presbytery of Belfast.” But his historical labours were soon interrupted by his appointment to the office of Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth. This call to share in the political duties of this illustrious period has been attributed to Cromwell, but there can be no doubt but that Bradshaw and Vane shared in this wise judgment of Milton’s extraordinary gifts; the friendship of these good and virtuous men being “a glory,” as Godwin says, “to the island which gave them birth.”*

To the political events of this period we need not again recur. Milton, no more than Vane, approved of the execution of the king; but when the act was irrevocable, he pursued the course a wise and earnest man would, who regarded public liberty at its own high value. “The evil was incurred,” says Macaulay, “and the object was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act, would have led us, after it had been committed, to defend it against the ravings of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have wished the people to approve of it, when it was done.”†

Removing evidently from his family for a brief period, Milton took lodgings in a house at Charing Cross, opening into Spring Gardens, and here he wrote “Eikonoklastes,” in answer to a book then just issued from the press, entitled “Eikon Basiliké, the Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings.” It was reported to have been written by the late king himself, and having an enormous sale, the Parliament, to stay its probable effect upon the peace of the kingdom, employed Milton to write his triumphant answer. The interest excited by the “Eikon,” and its reply, led the young prince Charles to employ a professor in the University of

* Hist. of Commonwealth, vol. ii. p. 36.

† Essays, vol. i. p. 43.

Leyden, of the name of Claude de Saumaise, or, as it was Latinized, Salmasius, to take up a further defence of arbitrary principles and divine right, with a view of exciting favour and sympathy in this country for the royal cause. Milton's reply, which he entitled, "A Defence of the People of England," gave him at once a European reputation. It crushed with consummate power the shallow arguments of the hireling writer, and by its sarcasm, made his apostasy a spectacle to the nations. Never was national liberty more ably defended ; never were civil rights more worthily vindicated ; never was despotism more fully unmasked, than in this masterpiece of English prose ! But the price was a large one—truth was vindicated—and Milton bereft of sight !

When these tasks were closed, Milton removed into "lodgings" in Scotland Yard, prepared for him by order of the Council of State. Of this we have two interesting notices, copied amongst others from the Council books in the State Paper Office, under the date of November 12th, 1649 : "Ordered, that Sir John Hipposley is spoken to that Mr. Milton may be accommodated with the lodgings that he hath at Whitehall ;" and on the 19th of the same month, this further notice, "That Mr. Milton shall have the lodgings that were in the hands of Sir John Hipposley in Whitehall, for his accommodation as being Secretary to the Council for Foreign Languages." Six months after this date, the lodgings thus occupied were, by an Order in Council to the Commissioners for the sale of the royal property, furnished with hangings. In 1651, the Council and the Committee of Parliament for Whitehall were at issue with regard to Milton's remaining in these lodgings ; the Council considering that Milton's employment necessitated him to live near at hand. It is probable that the matter was settled adverse to the wish of the Council, as he removed early in the following year, 1652, to a house he had taken in Petty France, Westminster. Several of Milton's finest State papers were issued during the period he lived in Scotland Yard ; and here it was that his third child, a son, was born and named John, though through bad management it did not long survive. There must have been sad household faults here ; the lameness of one child, the death of another, through ill-usage, give us glimpses into the home of Milton of a saddening kind. The truant wife was, we fear, no tender mother ; and one has a sort of longing to go back into that now dim century to order his household, to deck his particular chamber with sweet taste and care—flowers not forgotten ; to be near at hand to help him in the fast succeeding shadows of his blindness, and to tend his infant well—the young John Milton !

Petty France must have been a wonderfully pleasant place two centuries ago. Doubtless so named, though we have not seen it remarked, from the residence here of some portion of that swarm of French priests and parasites which came over to England upon the marriage of Henrietta with Charles I. It was an old custom to so name places when tenanted by strangers. Petty Wales by the Tower, and Petty France in

Bishopsgate Street, were instances. The house which Milton took was, as his nephew tells us, "a pretty garden house, . . . next door to the Lord Scudamore, and opening into St. James's Park." Seller's map of 1680 shows the line of houses of which Milton's was one. They were quite suburban, the park lying one way, Tothill Fields entirely open on the other. The Neat House, celebrated for its gardens, Chelsea and the river seen in the pleasant distance. Milton's house and garden faced the park, where close at hand was Rosamond's Pond, without doubt one of the old low-lying pools of the original marsh, but filled up in 1770, the site being now occupied by barracks. At the east end of Petty France, Tothill Street began, in which was the celebrated Gatehouse, pulled down in the last century; but preserved to all time in the flagitious history of despotism, for traditions of this character have an eternity of their own. When Tothill Fields were by degrees built over, Petty France became a street, and took the name of York Street, through the residence there, in 1708, of John Sharp, Archbishop of York. It is a mean and narrow street, though not thought so a century ago. Milton's house, No. 19, was occupied ten years ago by a cutler, and instead of fronting the park as formerly, faced York Street in a modern dress of very mean and shabby brickwork. A low, dirty shop-front, filled with knives, a square window above this, a pair of stag's antlers, as a sign, nailed to the wall between either, completed in 1852-3 the outer look of John Milton's house. Within, things looked old enough. Hazlitt resided in it some time for the poet's sake; and Jeremy Bentham, who lived many years close by in a detached house in Queen Square Place, incorporated what was once Milton's garden in his own, with the exception of a solitary cotton willow-tree, said to have been planted by the poet's hand. He likewise set up a stone on the park front of Milton's house, where it may still be seen, with this inscription, "SACRED TO MILTON, PRINCE OF POETS."

The eight years the illustrious statesman dwelt here were thick strewn with heavy tribulations. His first wife died in childbed of his third daughter Deborah; at the close of the same year, 1652, his sight was wholly lost to him; and his second wife, to whom he was married on the 12th of November, 1656,* died (?) within a year, in giving birth to her first child. Todd, who quotes the register of St. Margaret's, Westminster, places the date of her burial to February 10th, 1657. But is this correct? Should we not read July or August instead of February? Or is it true, after all, as one of Milton's granddaughters stated to Mr. Birch,† that the second wife died of a consumption three months after marriage? and may not his exquisite sonnet "On his deceased Wife," have been addressed to the first? We confess we cannot settle the point.

Yet, undeterred by blindness or heavy domestic griefs, Milton again took up the

* Register of St. Mary, Aldermanbury. Cunningham, p. 320.

† Life of Milton, by Dr. Newton, p. 66.

cause of liberty and truth, and wrote his "Second Defence of the People of England." A masterpiece as perfect as the first ; from which we glean much personal knowledge of himself, as well as derive affecting evidence that his blindness rather exalted than depressed his lofty powers ! That though enveloped in darkness, the "light of the Divine presence more clearly shone ;" that though "overshadowed by those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this' obscurity," he was "illuminated with an interior light more precious and more pure."* We listen, we reverence, we bow the knee : Earth, and all of earth, passes from before us at faith so perfect, at inspiration so sublime !

Milton has been reproached for taking office at this period under the Protector. The reproach is certainly undeserved. Milton loved republicanism ; nor did he conceal the face of his beloved idol ; but he loved peace still more. He was acquiescent ; he continued his official duties for a brief period ; but from the publication of the "Defensio Secunda" to the death of the Protector, he abstained from all personal interference in public questions. He saw, perhaps, that power was needed to crush the bigotry and bitterness of the Presbyterians. Yet if he did not oppose, neither did he applaud. "We suspect," says Macaulay, "that at the time of which we speak, the violence of political and religious enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts. That Milton chose well, no man can doubt who fairly compares the events of the Protectorate with those of the thirty years which succeeded it ; the darkest and most disgraceful in the English annals." †

Cromwell passed away ; the reins of power soon fell from the hands of that "foolish Ishbosheth" his son. Milton greatly rejoiced at this ; he was not for placing the governing power in the hands of a single person, and with new hopes for the resuscitation of the Commonwealth, his pen was again devoted to the cause of public good. The year 1659 saw the publication of "A Treatise of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes," as well as, "Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church ;" and through that and the next year several papers on the subject of the Commonwealth appeared. We can but briefly refer to the two former. The first of these clearly shows that Milton was aware of the imminent danger in which the country stood from the intolerance of the Presbyterians, and it is, as it were, an appeal to Parliament not to again interfere in matters of religion, but "recommending civil only to your proper care, ecclesiastical to those only from whom it takes both that name and nature ;" that "it will concern you while you are in power so to regard other men's consciences as you would your own should be regarded in the power of others, and to consider that any law against conscience

* Second Defence, Prose Works, p. 927.

† Essays, vol. i. p. 45.

is alike in force against any conscience, and so may, one way or other, rebound upon yourselves." He then adds that neither the Commonwealth nor religion will flourish in Christendom till "either they who govern discern between civil and religious, or they only who so discern shall be admitted to govern. Till then nothing but troubles, persecutions, commotions, can be expected; the inward decay of true religion among ourselves, and the utter overthrow at last by a common enemy." The opening sentence of this treatise contains its argument.* "That two things there be which have been ever found working much mischief to the Church of God and the advancement of truth; force on one side restraining, and hire on the other corrupting, the teachers thereof." He then proceeds to show the injustice of condemning a man for believing only as the State believes, and that so far from the magistrate interfering, or being the final judge, nothing but the conscience can be so in matters of religion; and this only each man for himself. For "if we must not believe as the magistrate appoints, why not rather as the Church? If not as either without convincement, how can force be lawful?" This plea, however, for the exemption of religion from State interference, had its limits in the view of Milton. It was one of the errors of his time, and from which no man, with the exception of Vane, seems to have been free. "For popery and idolatry I have much less to say," he wrote; "but this, for just reasons of State, more than of religion,"† and such were the limits generally professed by the Independents. But how spiritual was all within these limits prescribed by Milton. To him the Divine presence, as protecting the Gospel, then, as now, from the beginning, was paramount to a "statute or State religion," and warranted no interference from the civil power.

The next treatise, "Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church," is the severest thing Milton ever wrote. Not without reason, for he had seen the Presbyterians both contentious and greedy for those same Church revenues, tithes, and places, as they had so unsparingly condemned whilst such were held by the Episcopalians; and what was still worse in his eyes, not a few of the Independents, since they had risen to power, had been equally inconsistent. In this treatise Milton did not contend that the labourer was unworthy of hire, or that due recompense or reward was not needful. Such was an evil in the Church either from "excess thereof, or the undue manner of giving and taking it." "Spiritual gifts," he said, "come from God," and those thus favoured by His enriching grace were His ministers; that what was given to them in charity and Christian freedom was their true and only recompense, of which pluralities, non-residences, odious fees, or tithes formed no part. For "the true freedom of Christian doctrine and Church discipline," being subject to no superior judge but God only, "could not be dependent on the magis-

* Prose Works, pp. 412, 413.

† Ibid. p. 417.

trate for maintenance." For "two things," concludes Milton in memorable words, "independence and State hire in religion, can never consist long or certainly together." *

But this appeal was made in vain to the blind and besotted nation. Equally unheard was his warning voice in respect to the dangers of the Commonwealth. Thus his own were the last words of "expiring liberty," "till the race, accursed of God and man, was a second time driven forth to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations." †

The wonder will ever be that Milton escaped the retaliative vengeance of the new-hailed Stuart. He had powerful friends, and Mr. Godwin, in his "Lives of Edward and John Philips," gives us reason to think that it was in some degree through the interest of the former of his nephews that Milton was spared the fate of Vane or Marten. They were both Royalists; both from an early age had enlisted their venal pens in the service of that inconceivably base literature, which had no unimportant share in reversing all that the noble patriotism of the Long Parliament had achieved; and was itself the forerunning steps of a Circean demoralization and licentiousness that in all history has no parallel except in the latter stages of Roman nationality. Of the two brothers, Edward Philips was by far the best; and as age sobered his opinions, he settled down into a very decent sort of hack-author, kept a school near the Maypole, in the Strand, and at a later date became tutor to the young daughter of Evelyn. It was through his interest with Sir Thomas Clarges, brother-in-law of Monk, that his power to assist his uncle arose, and from this period the friendship between them seems to have been pleasantly renewed.

A few days previously to the Restoration, Milton withdrew to the house of a friend in St. Bartholomew's Close. Here he remained in safety, though active search was made for him, till the passing of the Act of Oblivion, in August, 1660. No place could be better suited for concealment. Intricate, obscure, with many outlets, it favoured purposes of this kind; and for this reason, it was a city of refuge for the worship of several religious denominations, through the persecutions of those twenty-eight years which lie stamped like the mark of Cain on the annals of our country. Methinks, if those old confined monks we saw ten years ago could have risen out of their cloistered graves, they would have driven out this arch-enemy of "superstitions and traditions taint," treated him to faggots and a stake before their lofty doors, and then returning would have purified their holy precincts with incense and the exorcism of prayer. But the day was gone!

When he could, with safety, come forth, Milton took a house again in Holborn, looking, as we are told, into Red Lion Fields, "neer K's gate," as Aubrey quaintly

* Prose Works, p. 437.

† Macaulay, Essays, vol. i. p. 47.

says. It was one probably of several "garden houses," marked in the old maps; the rest of this north side of Holborn being as yet fields. Red Lion Square was not built, and elm-trees shadowed in the ancient tavern of the Red Lion; whilst beyond lay the pleasant fields of Lamb's Conduit, then greatly resorted to on summer evenings, by those who came forth to take the air.

In 1662—the dates of this point greatly vary—Milton removed to Jewin Street, in his favourite precincts of Cripplegate. The house is said to have been on the south side, and was a "garden house," as most in the street then were. From an early period, till the close of the thirteenth century, the site of this street had been used as the burial-place of the Jews, but upon their iniquitous expulsion from this country in 1290, it was given to the Dean of St. Paul's, who let or sold it "to be turned into fair garden plots and summer houses for pleasure." It is not known in which residence Milton began his long-projected poem—probably a portion of it was written here, if it be true that he was six or seven years in the actual composition of "Paradise Lost." In this house it was that Ellwood, the young and earnest Quaker, came daily for some two months—Sunday excepted—to read to him, till his health failed him. "I took myself a lodging," he says, in his interesting *Life*, "as near to his house (which was then in Jewin Street) as conveniently as I could, and from thenceforward went every day in the afternoon (except on the first days of the week), and sitting by him in his dining-room, read to him in such books in the Latin tongue as he pleased to hear me read."*

Whilst living here Milton married his third wife, a lady recommended to him by his unvarying friend, Dr. Paget, a physician, residing close by, in Coleman Street. She must have been young at the time of this marriage, as she survived Milton upwards of half a century. The charge has been made that she treated her step-children with harshness; but Milton was like Lear, in the unhappy circumstance of "unkind daughters." She at least proved herself eminently disinterested, in taking a man blind, advanced in years, in but narrow circumstances, and with little other prospect before her than that of being his nurse. All this is greatly to her honour; and this the more, that she seems to have lived in great harmony with him; and, as there is evidence in the nuncupative will, attended to his comforts with both care and kindness. "To her," says Mr. Godwin, "we are in a degree indebted for the *Paradise Lost*; and, in a degree still greater, for the *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.† Of Milton's daughters little can be said that is advantageous. They may have suffered—the two elder especially—from the absence of maternal care, and through consequences attending their father's blindness and studious life; but their cheating and deceiving him, and making away with his books, bespeak a moral

* Ellwood's *Life*, p. 134.

† Lives of Edward and John Philips, p. 276.

pravity of the worst kind. One wonders that the natural instincts of love and pity were not their guide to some degree of truth and feeling. By Aubrey's testimony, Milton had attended to their education, and "had spent," as he himself said, "the greatest part of his estate in providing for them." Still, he was scarcely just in omitting them from his will: true greatness acknowledges nothing that is retributive; and the natural claims of child upon parent cannot with justice be ignored. Indeed, we think, with Mr. Mill, that one of the changes which is destined to mark an advanced jurisprudence will be that of placing the natural claims in testamentary matters beyond the influence of temporary pique, revenge, or self-interested claimants. But, for several years before his death, Milton seems to have been freed from the presence of his rebellious children.

Shortly after his third marriage, Milton removed from Jewin Street to a small house in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, the precise site of which we cannot elucidate. None of the old maps give it, at least in name. The reader must recollect, that our modern name of Bunhill Fields restricts itself to the well-known burial-ground, the "Campo Santo," as Southey calls, it of the Dissenters, opening into the City Road, and lying between that and Bunhill Row; but it had a far wider meaning at the date of Milton's residence. Originally, "Bunhill Field" meant that space of ground lying between Chiswell Street on the south, and Old Street on the north, and was one of *three* great fields belonging to Finsbury Manor Farm. In 1622 the southern portion of this field was taken for the purposes of a *new* Artillery Ground, and buildings began by degrees to grow around it; as this of late years had become a pleasant district, with its field-paths to "Iseldon" and Hoxton, and its abundant orchards and gardens round the ancient Roman way of Old Street. The remaining portion, therefore, of the field from the Artillery Ground to Old Street, was henceforth called "Bunhill" Field, and in one of the walks leading across, or by, the Artillery Ground to it, stood Milton's house. Phillips says, distinctly, "he," Milton, "removed to a house in the Artillery Walk, *leading to* Bunhill Fields."* And from Aubrey we gather that "he," Milton, "died in Bunhill, opposite to the Artillery Ground wall."† It, therefore, seems probable that the present Bunhill Row, only then very partially built, might be at that date called Artillery Walk, and that here at its southern end, towards Chiswell Street, we may place the site of the house in which much of the *Paradise Lost* was written, and the Prince of Poets died. It was *certainly*, if here, on the west side of Bunhill Row, as no houses, even in 1708, existed on the other; and some of the present vast timber-yards, with their pretty waving trees, and their oriental perfume of cedar-wood, were, we may not with uncertainty believe, the once pleasant garden of that long gone time. In Seller's map of 1680, a few houses are marked at the

* Life of Milton, p. 38.

† Lives, vol. iii. p. 449.

north-east corner of the Artillery Ground, somewhere about the present Providence Row ; this *may* have been the site, but it is a far less probable one than the other.

When the Great Plague of 1665 broke out, Milton and his family retired to Chalfont in Buckinghamshire. It is fortunate perhaps he did so, as the pestilence raged more fearfully in Cripplegate than elsewhere ; and to add to the danger, the great Finsbury Pit, so graphically described by De Foe, lay no great distance from Milton's door. He reached Chalfont some time in the full summer, and though picturesque nature was a blank to him, he must have vastly enjoyed the fresh warm



CHALFONT COTTAGE.

air, and the sweets from hayfield and garden. Mr. Howitt, who for this purpose visited Chalfont, thus describes the cottage : " The situation, though not remarkably striking, is by no means unpleasing. It is the first cottage on the right-hand as you descend the road from Beaconsfield to Chalfont St. Giles. Standing a little above the cottage, the view before you is very interesting. The quiet old agricultural village of Chalfont lies in the valley amid woody uplands, which are seen all round. The cottage stands facing you, with its gable turned to the wood, and pointing into its little garden and field. A row of ordinary cottages is built at its back, and face the road below. To the right ascends the grass-field mentioned ; but this, with extensive old

orchards above the house, is pleasing to the eye, presenting an idea of quiet rural repose, and of meditative walks in the shade of the orchard-trees, or up the field to the breezy height above. Opposite to the house, on the other side of the way, is a wheelwright's dwelling, with his timber reared amongst old trees, and above it a chalk-pit grown about with bushes. This is as rural as you can desire. The old house is covered in front with a vine, bears all the marks of antiquity, and is said by its inhabitant, a tailor, to be but little altered. There was, he says, an old porch at the door which stood till it fell with age. Here we may well imagine Milton sitting in the sunny weather, as at Bunhill Field, and enjoying the warmth and calm sweet air. . . . The house below consists of two rooms, the one on the left next to the road, a spacious one though low, and with its small diamond casements suggesting to you, that it is as much as when Milton inhabited it. Here he, no doubt, lived principally, and in all probability here was *Paradise Regained* dictated to his amanuensis, most likely at this time his wife, Elizabeth Minshull. . . . Outside, over the door, is an armorial escutcheon, at the foot of which is painted in bold letters "MILTON." . . . Milton had many old associations in Buckinghamshire which would recommend it to him, and in summer the air amid the heaths and parks of this part of the country is peculiarly soft, delicious, and fragrant. It was amidst these refreshing scenes that Milton finished *Paradise Lost*, here it was he showed the manuscript to Ellwood, and here it was that the young Quaker suggested to him *Paradise Regained*.

In the spring of the following year, Milton returned to London. After some months' delay, *Paradise Lost* was published in a thin quarto volume, bearing date 1667. It was printed on poor coarse paper, and was, as yet, but divided into two books. Its humble appearance, without gilt or garniture of any sort, is affecting proof that immortality and genius are not necessarily a contingent of hot-pressed paper and morocco binding. On its poor coarse leaves lay the reflex signs of vital, holy and inspired thoughts; thoughts, that through their words were to be an ever-living and harmonious music to coming and to countless generations. This was enough.

Other works followed, "*Paradise Regained*," "*Samson Agonistes*," "*A Treatise of True Religion, Heresie, Schism, Toleration, and what best means may be used against the Growth of Popery*," with several minor prose papers. To the last, his great and active mind never ceased its illustrious service; to the last, he might be often seen sitting at his doorway in the summer's sun, full of faith and trust in God, and full of gratitude for His least beneficence; to the last he kept his faith to the liberties of his country; to the last, men illustrious and otherwise came from far and near to see one so crowned by poetic glory. Though encompassed about with poverty, blindness, and old age, what state so great as his? what rest so earned? who so to be envied as he, when in inspired moments the face of Deity shone on him, and its result was an

EVER-LIVING HYMN? None can tell ! but those who, in lesser or greater degree, have moments when all of earth fades before the exaltation of the intellect, and sensual pleasures are seen to be but as dust in the comparison ! It is only such can tell.



CRIPPLEGATE CHURCH.

At length the time came when those sightless eyes were to be opened to a greater and more radiant day than is known to earth. Worn out by long suffering, he passed away, with a gentleness which left unmarked the moment of death, on Sunday, November 8th, 1674 ; and on Thursday, the 12th of the same month, he was buried

in the chancel of the old church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, in the grave of his father. The church already covered illustrious dust. That of John Speed, Foxe the martyrologist, and Sir Martin Frobisher, the mariner ; and at its altar, August 20th, 1620, Oliver Cromwell and Elizabeth Bouchier had been married. It is one of those churches that escaped the Fire of London ; and is not materially changed.

The services of Milton to the cause of civil and religious freedom cannot be overstated. Naturally bold and uncompromising, he avowed his principles, and shrank not from the result. Unostentatious and independent, yet a lover of beauty and refinement, he exemplified that combination of the democratic and aristocratic social elements which is destined to be so marked a practical feature of a period of civilization much higher than our own. As the culture necessary to this and other conditions of physical and mental progress becomes better understood, wide and far will be the search for intellectual strength and truth, and to no purer source, or to one more informing on many vital points, both civil and religious, can large-hearted and thoughtful Englishmen go—than to the prose writings of John Milton.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THAMES, LAMBETH, AND SOUTHWARK.—THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

ENGLISH landscape scenery owes much of its peculiar beauty and freshness to its abundant watershed. Go where we may—on to the wide heathery moors, into the depth of bosky woodlands, amid fern-clad commons, verdant uplands, or crowslipped meadows—the soul of the poet, the eye of the painter, the heart of each human creature who can value the ever-verdant, ever-living nature around him, is gladdened by gushing waters, cool, refreshing, lucent, from the hidden fountains of the earth. We have seen crystal springs upon the moors of Derbyshire and Yorkshire; gushing from mossy mountain-sides in Shropshire; lying low in the flowery meadows of the eastern counties—that we would immortalize on canvas if we could. Those things which typify the purity and ceaseless bounty of eternal nature, are worthy of likeness and of precious conservation.

Amid a pastoral scene of great simplicity—a little valley, a few scattered hawthorns, close-cropped sward, browsed by sheep in summer, and marish through the long winter-season—gushes forth the spring which forms the source of the River Thames. The place is called Tewsbury Mead, and lies in the parish of Cotes, in the county of Gloucester, and not far distant from the range of the Cotswold hills. The spring itself rises at the foot of an eminence on which are very considerable remains of a Roman encampment, called Tewsbury Castle, consisting of a double ditch, now covered with coppice-wood. It was probably an advanced post of the Romans, being situated three miles from Cirencester, and within a quarter of a mile of the great Roman road leading from that town to the ancient city of Bath.* In Cooke's lovely views on the River Thames, the spring is given in its original state, as gushing with great volume from the earth; but it is now formed into a sort of well, fenced in with stone, from which, in winter-time, it flows, and, joined by lesser contributory springs, winds through the meadow a pretty lucent rivulet. Though the spring itself is never dry, its streamlet, at first commencement, is often, in broad summer, marked only by a path of rushes; but, further on, in the middle of the meadow, it forms a little splashy pool, covered by a large flat stone resting on two others—the first bridge of

* Boydell, *Hist. of River Thames*, p. 2.

"royal towered Thame." Augmented by many a hidden silvery spring, from meadows crowned in summer-time with flowers, the little rivulet becomes navigable at Cricklade, nine miles from its source, several streams at this point contributing to make it so.

Thence, as it glides onward, by "its own sweet will," by pastoral leas, and sylvan pomp of woodland, we can little more than indicate mere names.

"Bank'd with embroidered meads of sundry suites of flowers,
His brest adorn'd with swans, oft washt with silver showers." *

It passes the classic halls of Oxford—up to this point old antiquarians long debated whether Thame or Isis be its name—through Buckinghamshire, with its associations



SOURCE OF THE THAMES.

of Milton's poetry and Hampden's patriotism, and minor ones of Fawley Court, the seat of Whitelocke—by Windsor and its historical memories and glorious woodland scenery, where

"Floating forests paint the waves with green,"

by Hampton Court and all the memorable names connected with it—Wolsey, Henry VIII., Cromwell, and William of Orange ;—by Twickenham and the haunts

* Drayton, Polyolbion, b. xvii.

of Pope and Horace Walpole ;—by Richmond, Fulham, Chelsea, to London. For many miles its way lay through enchanting pastoral scenes, and from Oxford to Chelsea the whole is classic ground.

The Thames, like other of the chief British rivers, was originally a vast estuary, flowing inland for many miles from the point which constitutes its mouth. Its waters may have once covered the site of London, and spread themselves as far as the high-lands of Middlesex ; and even after the “town of ships” had arisen, the estuary still inundated at high water the Southwark shore. Following a law peculiar to streams of this character, vast mud-banks were formed, the tide encroached less and less, places covered at high water lay dry at its ebb, and the Romans, bringing with them their admirable knowledge of drainage and embankment, soon placed thousands of acres without the reach of tidal influence. They embanked either side of the Thames for many miles. The embankments of the Essex shore yet exist. The reader may perhaps recollect the line along the shore beyond Southend. They are of vast benefit to the surrounding country ; and, at the period Wren wrote his “*Penetralia*,” a breach in this sea-wall of the Essex shore cost 17,000*l.* for its reparation. On the southern shore of the Thames, the embankments were equally a masterpiece,* though they sooner perished, from causes that will be presently obvious. The sites of what were afterwards Deptford, Bermondsey, Southwark,† and Lambeth, thus saved from inundation, the Romans brought their permanent ways of what were afterwards called by the Saxons Watling Street and Ermine Street, from the southern ports of Anderida (Pevensey), Dubræ (Dover), and Rutupiaë (Richborough), to the shores of the Thames, and, if we may rest upon an induction drawn from many important facts, threw a bridge across the Thames.‡ All tradition of this has perished ; but that is no matter. The legionaries, as we have seen, could handle the trowel as well as the sword ; and the classical or architectural reader knows that bridge-building was one of the culminating points of Roman art, and one that modern science has scarcely surpassed ; whilst the excavations, which for some years were carried on through the antiquarian zeal of Mr. Roach Smith and others, elicited how much the arch was made use of in the Roman architecture of this country. As this is so, where is the improbability of a Roman bridge over the Thames ? Trajan had built one over the far mightier waters of the Danube ; and it is not probable that permanent ways, like those of Watling Street and Ermin Street, brought through the wondrous forest of Anderida (whose centuries of fallen mast make to this day the far-famed richness of the Weald of

* Manning and Bray's *Surrey*, b. iii. p. 346.

† Dugdale was of opinion that Southwark could never have been built but for previous embankment.

‡ There can be but little doubt that the erection of a bridge at Londinium closely followed the conquest of Britain.”—*Illustrations of Roman London*, P. 20.

Kent) and across the swamps of Southwark, ended at last in a ferry-boat. That this northern end of these great roads was fortified, is also another fact from which we may draw our conclusions; and over the whole district, from the site of Lambeth to that of Deptford, buildings were scattered, as the discovered foundations of villas and stations prove to us. What, therefore, so probable, that a bridge led from the great conjoint road—its line was the present High Street, Southwark—into the heart of Roman London? The mass of Roman pottery found constantly in the Thames at this point, adds its testimony.

Be this as it may, the Roman power declined, and the Thames, Southwark, and Lambeth became henceforth connected with the history and exploits of a new race of invaders, that of the Saxons, and after their settlement on the soil, with that of the Danes. Sometimes in nature, as oftener in the history of races and nations, we find strength built on weakness, and mightiest advantages on the basis of disadvantage; so those points which now constitute the very glory of our great national river—its breadth, its accessibility from the ocean, or as the Northmen termed it, “England’s sea,” its splendid harbourage, its noble tide, were in the eighth and ninth centuries the very causes of continual misery and desolation to London and the surrounding counties. The waves which bring to us the bounty of the world, our corn, our oil, our wine, bore on them at that early day continuous hordes of Northmen, who, tempted by the wealth of London, made constant incursions upon it and its neighbourhood from their landing places amid the sand-hills and islands at the mouth of the Thames. The Saxons in the meanwhile had, in occupying London, occupied Southwark, and made use of the fortifications erected by the Romans. It seems probable that they called the place Burg or Burgh (*municipium*), a clear proof of the existence of defences or boundaries of Roman origin; that of “Sydvirke,” or Southwark, being such pure Danish as to belong more properly to the period of Danish than of Saxon occupation;* for the swarms of Vikings that were constantly lurking at the mouth of the Thames, soon proceeded from the object of plunder to that of conquest. In 993, a numerous fleet, headed by King Anlaf, or Olave, of Norway, sailed up the Thames as far as Staines, and on the fact of there being no obstruction to its course, antiquarians have rested their belief that as yet no bridge had existed across the Thames. But let us recollect how utterly Roman London had perished even by this age. How vast temples, of which ours and preceding generations have uncovered the foundations, have no mention in tradition or history, and why not this for the spanning arches of a bridge, more open to ruin and more likely to decay? Think too of a century of Danish spoliation, sheer brute destruction being one of their means of victory, and add to this two previous centuries of Saxon neglect! The

* Worsaae, Danes and Northmen in England, p. 15.

point is not only probable but positive, for the rule that would allow an embankment like that of Southwark to fall so far into ruin, as for portions of the district to be again inundated at high water, would surely leave a bridge, if once decayed, to take its course. We more than hazard the conjecture that whenever the long talked-of embankment of the Thames is undertaken, evidence will be forthcoming that a bridge existed across the Thames in the time of the Romans. There will be no doubt as to the masons who built it. Like the poetry of Shakespeare, or the colouring of Titian, it will tell its master-hand. In the year 1008 we have testimony that a bridge was in existence, and around it and upon it was fought a terrific battle between the Danes and Saxons, in which the former were defeated and the bridge destroyed. It appears to have been quickly re-edified, for eight years afterwards, 1016, Canute, coming hither with a fleet, caused a deep ditch to be dug round the Surrey side of the bridge, through which his ships were drawn into the river above bridge. Maitland, the historian of London, is said to have traced this canal from its beginning at Rotherhithe to its influx opposite Chelsea. For this canal, says Mr. Craik, "there was probably very little digging; Canute in all likelihood found the new passage he wanted for his ships made to his hands by the natural inundations from the river, and in proceeding so far beyond the bridge, only followed the guidance of the deeper and more navigable parts of the great marsh."* Thus was "Sydvirke" the scene of the contests of two nations cognate in race and language; and from the time of this triumph of Canute, there can be no doubt but that the Danes greatly settled here, and made it their trading mart. They gave the name to Greenwich (Grenvic); they originally founded, there can be no doubt, the ancient churches of St. Olave's, and St. Magnus the Martyr near London Bridge; and Lambeth, or as they termed it "Lambythe," was a favourite rural resort, where at the country-house of a jarl their last king, Hardicanute, died suddenly in 1042, whilst sharing in the pleasures of a marriage feast.† This manor seems to have belonged originally to the Crown, though seized and possessed by the Danes, as was the district generally. In Edward the Confessor's time, Lambeth formed part of the possessions of his sister, the Countess Goda, wife of Walter, Earl of Mantes, and afterwards of Eustace, Earl of Boulogne. By her it was afterwards given to the bishop and church of Rochester. Mr. Worsaae, himself a Dane, considers this southern suburb of London to have borne on it for centuries the strong impression of a Danish population, as London and the whole south of England likewise did; and wherever this was the case, there, when the fierce Viking valour had been tempered by civilization and Christianity, was sure to exist the most invincible spirit of liberty. We are wonderful debtors to this Danish blood which flows through our veins; and it is not incurious to recollect, that on these

* Knight's London, vol. i. p. 77.

† Worsaae, Danes and Northmen in England, p. 20.

hearths of the old Vikings their after generations prayed in secret and founded their little church ; that in some tiny bay of the Southwark shore, where the old Norsemen had rested or repaired their shallops, there the keel of the "sacred bark" was laid ; and those waves, which had borne *in* a fierce and heathen race, bore *out* seven centuries after a frail shipful of men and women, who in part owned the old blood with its contingents of courage, indomitable will, and energy. Their purpose was to escape prelatic tyranny ; they knew not that a nation was to spring from their loins, or that they were to found cities in the howling wilderness.

"But what exploits with theirs shall page,
Who rose to bless their kind ;
Who left their nation and their age,
Man's spirit to unbind ?" *

After the Conquest, Southwark, which William the Norman laid in ashes, and its neighbourhood, from Lambeth on the west to Bermondsey on the east, passed into new hands. Every covetable spot belonged to the Church. It is no exaggeration to style it the Church's garden ; and between this period and the Reformation, parks, palaces, abbots' inns and monasteries, crowded this shore. Lambeth fell to the share of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, half-brother of the Conqueror ; but Rufus restored it, with the addition of the church of Lambeth, to the monks of Rochester, whose possession of this and other manors was further confirmed in 1103 by King Henry to Archbishop Anselm and Bishop Gundalph. As the revenues arising from this source were specially assigned for the maintenance of the monks of Rochester Cathedral, the productiveness of the land, or the profits arising from tithes and rent-charge, must have been considerable. But before the century was closed, namely in 1197, the Bishop of Rochester and his monks exchanged the manor-house and church of Lambeth with Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, for the manor of Darent and other possessions in the county of Kent. A little later the entire manor, with the exception of a small plot of land reserved by the see of Rochester, passed into the archbishop's hands, and has thus continued a possession of the see of Canterbury ever since.

The bridge from the Surrey to the Middlesex shore, which Canute had passed by so cunning a device, was blown down in 1091, but, re-edified by Rufus, was again destroyed in 1136 by a fire, which laid the city of London in ruins from Ludgate to St. Paul's. This was rebuilt in 1163, and finally one of stone was commenced in 1176, a little to the west of the other, and finished in 1209.† The architect was a curate of St. Mary's Colchurch, near the Poultry ; and with various modifications

* Boston Commemoration Ode, 1830. Hanbury's Memorials, vol. i. p. 397.

† Boydell's Thames, p. 53.

his work descended to the present generation. Six hundred years and more had connected the old bridge with some of the most important incidents in our national and domestic history.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Lambeth, Southwark, and Bermondsey, as viewed from Westminster and the City, must have been picturesque in the extreme. The manor-house at Lambeth seems at first to have been an ordinary timber and plaster house ; but the Pope's mandate to Baldwin, Hubert's predecessor in the see of



REMAINS OF WINCHESTER PALACE.

Canterbury, and the jealousies and quarrels of Hubert himself with the see of Rochester, led him to make Lambeth his chief residence in preference to Canterbury. Hence buildings were erected by these prelates ; but their edifice, such as it might be, was in a great measure if not wholly rebuilt by Archbishop Boniface about the year 1262. What remains of this structure is supposed to form part of the present chapel, or indeed may belong to an earlier period, as its windows resemble those of the Temple Church, which was built in the twelfth century.

The foreground of Southwark, as seen from the City and Blackfriars, was marked by the splendid church and conventual buildings of St. Mary Overies, and by Winchester Palace and Park, the most sumptuous of any round London. This park covered an extent of seventy acres, and was enriched with magnificent trees, some of which—chestnut-trees of prodigious size—were used in the building of Gracechurch Street, after the Fire of London.* In the old maps of Southwark, Winchester Park occupies a prominent place. There was a large pool in it, called “Loman’s Pool.” The palace, which was of great size, and celebrated for its deep oriel windows, from whence was a splendid view of London, was built in 1107, by William Gifford, Bishop of Winchester, on land purchased from the Abbey of Bermondsey, and last inhabited by the bishops of the see in 1626. In the civil wars, it was made use of as a prison for the Royalists. Here it was that Sir Kenelm Digby was confined ; here it was he



CRYPT OF THE INN OF THE PRIORS OF LEWES.

wrote his critical remarks on the “Religio Medici” of Sir Thomas Browne,† and employed much of his time in chemical experiments upon the nature of gems.‡ In 1649, it was sold by the Parliament ; but reverting to the see at the Restoration, and the bishop obtaining an Act to build a house elsewhere, the park was broken up and built upon, and the palace pulled down, with the exception of the Gothic hall, which existed till 1814, when it was destroyed by fire.§ Amidst the little streets and lanes that thus arose were Deadman’s Place and the church of the Pilgrim Fathers. Close against Winchester Palace was the inn of the Bishops of Rochester,

* Manning and Bray’s Surrey, vol. iii. p. 547.

† Cunningham, p. 557.

‡ Manning and Bray’s Surrey, vol. iii. p. 586.

§ Concanen and Morgan, Hist. of Southwark, p. 189.

and on the other side of the High Street were those of the Priors of Lewes and St. Augustine's, Canterbury, of the Abbots of Hyde and Battle, in Sussex; whilst annexed to the latter were a garden, and a maze of great celebrity. This name still lingers in the streets built on its site, and there yet exist a few remains of the old abbatial dwelling. The Church had thus the lion's share of Southwark, the dwellings of the Borough lying within a small compass, as the old maps show. But small as it was, Southwark was so distinct from London as to be governed by its own bailiff till 1327; after this period it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Mayor of London, or his deputy, for the purpose of a better administration of justice, and to secure malefactors that were accustomed to escape thither from the City bounds. Another celebrity of Southwark was Suffolk House, built in the reign of Henry VIII., and afterwards converted into a mint. There were, also, five prisons in it; the Compter, the Clink, the Marshalsea, the King's Bench, the White Lion; the last four sufficiently familiar to the readers of the civil and ecclesiastical history of England. The names of Udal, Penry, Barrow, Greenwood, and Sir John Eliot, are connecting instances among many others. In 1579, a hundred persons died within the King's Bench in the course of a few days; "and many times," says Stow, "it so happened, namely in the summer, persons, that through want of air, and to *avoid smouldering*, were forced in the night to call out to the marshal's servants, to come and open the windows of the wards."* In such way were human creatures herded together like beasts.

Indeed, the whole shore of Southwark abounds in matter of exceeding interest. In the High Street are yet some remains of the ancient hostelry, the "Tabard," immortalized by Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales;" those masterpieces of early English verse, in which humour, wit, and high descriptive power, in combination, so effectively exposed the gross ecclesiastical abuses of the time. Chaucer, in this manner, broadcast many of Wycliffe's opinions upon the popular mind, and did thus incalculable service.

It was this same period in which Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, repaired and improved Lambeth Palace, and added, between the years 1434 and 1435, to the west end of the chapel, at an expense of 278*l.* 2*s.* 11½*d.*, as appears by the steward's accounts, the tower known as the Lollards' Tower. Lambeth Palace had already been the scene of many important events. Church councils and State councils had been held here; the insurgents under Wat Tyler had attacked it, burned its furniture, records, and books, and Sudbury, the then archbishop, had been beheaded in the Tower. It was at the citation of this prelate that Wycliffe had appeared in St. Paul's, and afterwards at a more private council in the chapel at Lambeth, wherein not only

* Strype's Stow, b. iv. p. 19.

the citizens, but the mob, forced themselves, in order to speak in the great reformer's behalf.

Prior to the erection of the Lollards' Tower, the archbishops of Canterbury had a prison at Lambeth, as, indeed, seems to have been the case in other dioceses. Little is known of these sufferers, though several of the proceedings against them are still extant in the registers of the see. Of one, however, a priest and master of arts, named William Tailour, some information has reached our times. He was in prison at Lambeth in 1402, on a charge of heresy, at the instance of Archbishop Arundel. He was excommunicated; but recanting, he received absolution in Lambeth Chapel. Again he relapsed, recanted, and was pardoned. But on the third occasion, namely in February, 1442, he was convicted as a relapsed heretic; and on the last day of the same month, he was degraded in form from all his Church functions, and delivered over to the secular power; Chichele himself presiding in St. Paul's Cathedral, when the sentence of deprivation was executed. What his ultimate fate was is not known, but his tenets were similar to those embraced by the Puritans in an after-day. He considered, "that prayer ought to be addressed to God only; that praying to any created being is idolatrous; and that the worship due to God was not due to Christ in His human, but in His Divine character." * For these opinions, he probably perished in one of those numberless fires which now lighted Smithfield.

The prison built by Chichele for the incarceration of his victims is the topmost room of the so-called Lollards' Tower. It is small, being ten feet six inches wide by fourteen feet ten inches long; there is a window as well as chimney towards the north; another window looking westward; and the whole room, ceiling and floor alike, is cased with immensely thick oak wainscot or planking. This was done either to insure warmth or to deaden the cries and appeals of prisoners; perhaps both. Inserted in the wainscot still remain eight massive rings, to which those confined in this room were doubtless chained, of some few of whom the names carved on the wainscot preserve the only memory, though forcibly indicating many weary hours of suffering and monotony. "John Worthe;" "Chessam, Doctor;" "John Frocke;" "Thomas Bacar;" "Austin;" "Pierre Anrackki;" are as names the only tangible signs of those who suffered and lived so long ago.

So fierce was the spirit of persecution throughout the fifteenth century, and so prominent a part did Archbishop Chichele and his immediate successors take in the cruel but vain attempt to crush all advance in religious and secular opinions, as to necessitate other places of confinement in their palace beside the Lollards' Tower, and more direct methods of punishment than that of mere incarceration. A room leading from the porter's lodge was used as a prison, as iron rings yet remaining in the

* Ducarel's Hist. of Lambeth Palace, p. 46.

excessively thick walls only too plainly show ; and the lowest storey of the Lollards' Tower has yet a whipping-post in its centre. The crypt beneath may have also been used as a place for the more direct torture of the rack, for, as in the case of the vaults used for this execrable purpose in the Tower, its recesses would give forth no evidence of fiendish perpetration.

After the ample discussion of the matter in our first chapter, it would be superfluous for us to enter into any details respecting the earlier forms of dissent from the doctrines taught by the Catholic Church as those at once positive and infallible, or of the progress of this dissent throughout the great mass of the people. The case of Tailour curiously bears out our opinion that the lower order of clergy were powerfully instrumental in favouring as well as promulgating Wycliffe's doctrines ; and the bitterness and ruthlessness with which the higher clergy hunted down this class of secessionists, not only as respected total heresy, but even such a minor thing as a plea for a slightly extended liberty of conscience, proves that they were conscious where the greatest danger lay, though their bigotry blinded them as to the utter inutility of punishment and repression. The eternal laws of the universe bid man progress in ideas as well as in the material advantages surrounding him, and neither that age nor any other—neither a priesthood nor any other class—can keep stationary that which God Himself has made progressive. To prove how every opinion and word was watched, as respected their own body, we have only to mark the citation of Reginald Peacock, Bishop of Chichester, to appear at Lambeth in 1457. He was not a Lollard, nor had he expressed sympathy in any way with Wycliffe's opinion, but he was a learned and good man, and would have yielded a comparative freedom upon such minor points of doctrine and observance as were unsettled or obscure. Yet for this divergence, slight as it was, he was convicted, and would have been burnt but that he recanted. There the charity of his persecutors stayed ; he had to make his adjuration at St. Paul's Cross, as also to witness the burning of such books as he had written, and finally he was left to perish in prison. Such were those miserable days of bigoted ignorance and irresponsible power in the hands of men, often good in themselves, but corrupted by the necessities and principles of a system whose ministers and servants they were. Thus things progressed from bad to worse, till, in this land of ours, if a man was wiser or better than his neighbour, if he refused to pay tithe, if he smiled at the threats of excommunication, seeing that his wheat grew, and the sun shone on him as heretofore, the danger of the stake was his. Well might men pine for days of reformation, for they were indeed needed, and happy he who nursed heresy against a system so accursed.

Had we space to say much more on many interesting points, the luxury and state maintained at Lambeth Palace by the several archbishops during the reigns of Henry VIII., Queen Elizabeth, and James I. would not be without significance.

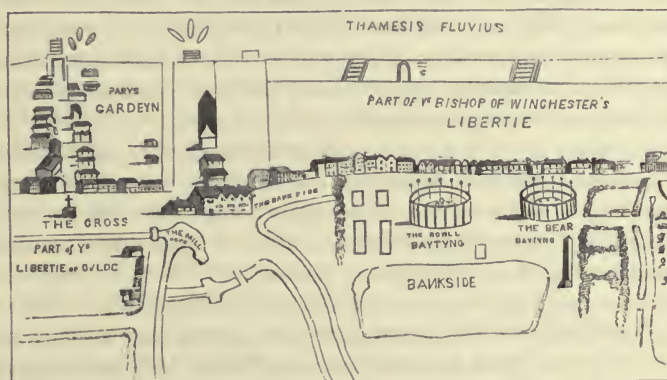
Cranmer and Parker rivalled royalty itself, and abated nothing of that cost and waste of means which had been so justly complained of in their Catholic predecessors. Then came the days of Laud, and the miserable tyrannies of which he was, in many cases, the father. A coward by nature, he trembled at last. He dreamt bad dreams, ill omens were innumerable, and he cowered within Lambeth Palace, as though conscious that his mutilated victims, Bastwick, Leighton, and Prynne, would have justice at last. They had, and he passed unpitied to his fate, though it would have been nobler to have spared and left him to the natural results of ignominy and old age. But action was simply reversed, and the persecuted became, as persecutors, as contemptible as those at whose hands they had suffered. So essentially corrupting is all irresponsible power.

Lambeth Palace was sold by the Long Parliament, and in that reprehensible spirit of iconoclasm, which was alike the great blot on the Reformation, the magnificent library was dispersed hither and thither, though portionally gathered together again and reinstated after the Restoration. Since then many good and generous men have added to its treasures, and beautified the fine old building, with which are connected so many events of deep interest in our national history. In the Gordon riots, Lambeth Palace narrowly escaped destruction at the hands of the worst mob that ever disgraced England; for the leaders were imbecile bigots, and their followers too ignorant to know right from wrong. But what can be said for our own age in these things, when the admirer, in an artistic sense, of a few old ruins, or a cathedral arch, or the editor of a magazine devoted to archaeological matters, is called "Jesuit" and "papist"—when religious opinion, not strictly evangelical, is stigmatized as "wisdom and philosophy," as though wisdom and philosophy *were not* the divine things they are, and when freedom of thought is deemed heretical?

Apart from its palace, Lambeth is an interesting place. Till quite recent years, it lay separated from Southwark by a wide breadth of marshy fields, known as Lambeth Marsh and St. George's Fields. In a map of 1775 a few cross roads and a few scattered houses are the only connecting link between the two places. At a far earlier day, a Roman causeway crossed the marsh from Southwark, and debouched on the river side at Lambeth, at a spot yet known as Stangate Lane. On the opposite shore—though the exact spot is variously stated—there was a branch of Watling Street which led up to what was afterwards known as Hampstead, and a ferry connected the two. At the close of the sixteenth century the population of Lambeth was small, but in the beginning of the eighteenth century it contained 1,400 houses. The opening of Westminster Bridge in 1750 led to its rapid increase, till now Lambeth is as much an integral part of London as Finsbury or Westminster. It formerly contained several noble houses, of which Norfolk House was one. In South Lambeth was the celebrated garden of the Tradescents. The younger of this name bequeathed

his collections to Ashmole, the antiquary; and here, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the latter received the visits of many illustrious foreigners and others. Potteries, glasshouses, and breweries now occupy the site of these places; but the productive utilities are comparatively as fine in their way as botanical gardens or antiquarian treasures.

To return to Southwark. During the middle ages, the houses of the Borough lay chiefly congregated round the southern foot of old London Bridge, and were fringed, as it were, by pleasant fields, gardens, and marsh. To the east lay Bermondsey Abbey,



PLAN AND PART OF OLD SOUTHWARK.

with its grange, orchards, pastures, and mill-streams; for it was quite a place of water, low-lying and green, yet with sufficient woodland around it, as at the date of the Conquest, to afford "pannage" for hogs. To the west of Southwark, and forming a part of it, was the Bankside. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth this was an open and partially cultivated spot. It belonged to the Crown, and on it stood the Globe Theatre, in which most of Shakespeare's plays were first acted; Paris Gardens, where Ben Jonson performed; the Bear Gardens, and three other places of public entertainment, known as the Hope, the Rose, and the Crown. Here also were the Pike Gardens; a preserve of river-fish for the use of the royal table.* St. Mary Overy, now called St. Saviour's, we have already mentioned. It was the church of the Priory of St. Mary Overy, and was converted into a parish church at the disso-

* Concanen and Morgan's Hist. of Southwark, p. 192.

lution. Mutilated as it has been, nothing but the choir and Lady Chapel remaining of the old church, it stands next to Westminster Abbey in the beauty of its peculiar style. In the fourteenth century it was restored, the poet Gower contributing the principal funds ; here he was married in 1397 by the benevolent William of Wykeham, then bishop of the see ; and here, in 1404, he was buried. His exquisite monument is still in existence. In 1554 St. Mary Overy narrowly escaped destruction in the Wyatt rebellion. The adjacent palace was, however, sacked, and its extensive library destroyed. In the following year, 1555, the Lady Chapel was used by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, as a consistorial court during the trial of Bishop Hooper, John Rogers, John Bradford, Mr. Saunders, and Drs. Croome and Ferrars. It is needless to say what was their fate. Within the church and churchyard rests the dust of Shakespeare's brother Edmond, as well as that of Massinger, Beaumont, and Fletcher, and several of Shakespeare's assisting players. St. Saviour's was also the scene of Dr. Sacheverel's pulpit masquerades.

From the evidence we have given from Strype's *Stow*, and Concanen and Morgan's *History of Southwark*, it would appear that none of the streets now built upon the site of Winchester Park to the west were in existence previously to the Restoration. This gives great weight to Pennant's opinion that Deadman's Place "took its name from the number of dead interred there in the Great Plague" of 1665.* Wilson, in his *History of Dissenting Churches*, refers this circumstance to the earlier Plague of 1625 ; † but this could not be, as Winchester Palace and Park were at that time not only in existence, but occupied by the celebrated Lancelot Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, who died in the next year, 1626, and whose memory Milton honoured with a Latin elegy. By the Church in Southwark is, therefore, meant a body of assembled Christians, agreed to one form of faith and religious observance. But till the sitting of the Long Parliament in 1641, or the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, there could have been no settled edifice for Congregational worship.

Amongst the principles of the Gospel which we may consider as essential and primary, are those of individual independence of human authority in all matters concerning religious faith and practice, and the independence of every congregation met for worship, from all control or interference, whether it be of an internal or external character. Principles such as these, alike worthy of the faith of which they are elements, alike worthy of the ennobling spiritual freedom which they confer on man individually and on men collectively, were lost sight of after the first few centuries of primitive Christianity, when the Apostles had passed away, and simple congregations and simple worshippers had become alike corrupted through the connexion of what was essentially spiritual with place, power, and formal observance.

* London, p. 52.

† Vol. iv. p. 121.

It may be, too, that these essential principles of religious freedom, necessarily practical in the first instances, required a higher period of human civilization for their full development; and thus for a long time, through ages that have been well called "dark," the pregnant truth seems to have been utterly lost sight of, that men in their spiritual relations can own no authority but that of God. This is a truth as beautiful as it is philosophical, as rich in its results for piety and faith as for those of civil circumstances.

In a degree these truths dawned upon the understandings of the first reformers. Wycliffe, in some senses perceived them, though not in all; for it would seem to be a law, that however transcendent an individual may be, either in genius or in perceptive faculties, he cannot so wholly free himself from the prevalent opinions of his age as not to yield to them in some point or another. Hence, not clearly perceiving the distinction between what Milton concisely calls "spiritual power and civil, and what each means," and biassed by the imperfect notions then current in regard to legislation, the first reformers, and even the first religious exiles from our shores, referred to authority in many ways incompatible with perfect religious equality and freedom. The congregations that met in secret throughout the reign of Mary, and the earlier part of that of Elizabeth, were rather independent from the force of circumstances than from any recognition of principle. Independency was practised, though its principles were not the basis of their faith.

But truth, though hindered, cannot be suppressed. If it be vital, it is as irrepressible as it is certain of development. The necessity of secret worship not only proved the applicability of the congregational method to all the necessities of public worship, but the formula so persistingly carried out by Queen Elizabeth and her bishops led the persecuted to pass from dissent to ceremonies, to the examination of principles, and to the origination of that authority at whose instance they suffered. The result was most effective. There was difference in opinion, much discussion, varying arguments, little advance probably towards even a conception, that a spiritual Church cannot, with righteousness, be allied to civil power. But to question truth is to advance its promulgation; and thus the public mind was in some measure prepared for the reception of the principles of spiritual independency. Their avowal was made by a relative of Lord Burghley, named Robert Browne, and those who advanced with him in this consideration of religion as freed from human authority, were called Brownists. This took place in 1580. The next year, to avoid persecution, he left the kingdom, and, with fifty or sixty persons who accompanied him, he settled at Middleburgh in Zealand, where he formed a Church after his own model. Owing to dissensions amongst his congregation, Browne returned to England in 1585. Here, probably influenced by his aristocratic relatives, he recanted, or at least conformed, and being preferred to the rectory of Achurch, near Oundle in Northamptonshire, died

at an advanced age in 1630. But the principles of Independency were too vital to be subverted through the weakness of individual reaction ; they wonderfully spread both in London and throughout the country, and in 1592 these opinions were held, it is supposed, by no less than twenty thousand persons. Various congregations were formed in the provinces, and one in London. This latter was held at the house of a person named Fox, living in Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street ; and a Brownist, named Francis Johnson, formerly of Christ Church College, Cambridge, was chosen pastor of the congregation. Here it did not worship long. It had to be shifted from place to place, to escape the lynx-eyed pursuivants of Aylmer, Bishop of London, and after several persons connected with it had been apprehended, and lodged in prison, the entire congregation was arrested in 1593, during Divine service on the Sabbath, and, curious to relate, on the same spot in Islington as Roger Holland and his disciples had occupied, and from whence they were taken, in the reign of Queen Mary. Fifty-six of these Brownists were sent to the several prisons in and near London. Great numbers died from want and infectious diseases ; several were executed, and others banished. Amongst those who suffered were Barrow and Greenwood, as related in a previous chapter. Shortly afterwards, John Penry, a young Welshman, was arrested at Stepney, and brought to trial, not for alleged participation, as it has been stated, in the Martin Mar-prelate tracts, as that was a charge from which he had already cleared himself, but for the general fact of his being a Brownist, and for opinions expressed in a petition and other papers taken from him. He was tried and convicted, there being no desire in his prosecutors to spare him ; his so-called conviction being an infamous infringement of justice ; and a protestation, which he delivered in upon his trial with another paper, entitled "Confession of Faith and Allegiance unto the Lord and her Majesty," is, as Mr. Hallam says, "in a style of the most affecting and simple eloquence." Few, we think, could read it unmoved. But Whitgift was deaf to its exquisite pathos and Christian sentiments ; and thus was sacrificed in cold blood a human creature, whom Christ, had He sat upon the judgment-seat, would have raised and blessed ! Penry received his sentence on the 25th of May, 1593, and four days after was executed. "It was never known before this time," says Neal, "that a minister and a scholar was condemned to death for private papers found in his study. . . . But Penry must die, right or wrong. The archbishop was the first man who signed the warrant for his execution. The warrant was sent immediately to the sheriff, who the very same day erected a gallows at St. Thomas Waterings', and while the prisoner was at dinner, sent his officers to bid him make ready, for he must die that afternoon. Accordingly he was carried to the place of execution ; when he came thither, the sheriff would not suffer him to speak to the people, nor make any profession of his faith towards God, or his loyalty to the queen, but ordered him to be turned off in a hurry about five o'clock in the evening, May 29th, 1593, in the

thirty-fourth year of his age.”* This St. Thomas a Waterings is distinctly marked in the old maps as a brook or streamlet making its way to the Thames. It was the place of execution for the county of Surrey, and was situated above the second milestone on the Old Kent Road; and so called because the streamlet or spring was dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket. Chaucer calls it “The watering of Seint Thomas.” †

Francis Johnson, already referred to as the pastor of the Nicholas Lane Meeting, was amongst the first body of exiles who quitted this country after the seizure of his congregation at Islington. Soon after his settlement in Holland he was joined by Henry Ainsworth, a Brownist, and a man of vast erudition, who assisted him in his pastoral office, for a large number of Johnson’s congregation had quitted England with him. Johnson and Ainsworth proceeded onward with great equanimity, and in 1602 they republished, as a joint production, a previously issued “Confession of Faith.” From this it appears that they, and the Independents under their pastoral charge, regarded every Christian congregation or local church as a self-governing body, though they still entertained the opinion that religion must be connected with civil authority. “In the thirty-ninth article they allow princes and magistrates to ‘suppress and root out by their authority all false ministers, voluntary religious, and counterfeit worship of God,’ and even to ‘enforce all their subjects, whether ecclesiastical or civil, to do their duties to God and men.’ It is singular to find this so long maintained by the early Independents, more especially as it is so much at variance with their other opinions” . . . but “educated and trained in erroneous principles, it required time and much collision of mind with mind to arrive at those simple but harmonious views which the New Testament affords respecting the basis of Christian fellowship and organization.” ‡

Controversies both within and from without soon disturbed the peace of the little church at Amsterdam, and amongst those who attacked its polity was Henry Jacob, who, at no late date, became himself conspicuously attached to the ministry as well as to the principles of the Independents. Whilst these matters proceeded, the exiles watched with great anxiety the course of public events in their native land, and were led to hope that the advent of a new reign would fully confirm the comparative ease which the Puritans had enjoyed during the few last years of the queen’s life. How grievously they were disappointed, we well know. The ecclesiastical farce performed at Hampton Court—where, as Mr. Hallam says, “we are alternately struck with wonder at the indecent and partial behaviour of the king, and at the abject baseness of the bishops”§—was but the prelude to a new and systematic persecution of both Puritans and Independents. The prisons were again filled, and

* Neal, *Puritans*, vol. i. p. 379.

‡ Fletcher’s *Hist. of Independency*, vol. ii. p. 221.

+ Cunningham, p. 493.

§ *Constitutional Hist.* vol. i. p. 297.

many, to avoid a worse fate, "banished themselves" from the kingdom. Amongst those who left the country in this second exile of Independency was John Robinson, the pastor of an Independent congregation in or near Norwich. Educated at Cambridge, he had afterwards accepted a benefice in the neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth. Here, becoming gradually convinced of the principles of Independency, he for some time held a private congregation; but ultimately quitting the Church, he repaired to Norwich, and attached himself, probably as pastor, to one of two Congregational bodies established in that city. But the separatists suffering inconceivable persecution, and perceiving no other prospect before them, resolved to change their country for Holland, where they might at least be permitted to worship in peace. At this period of the history of Independency, great difficulties arise both as to the nature of the emigration and its date. In all probability it was a general and concerted migration of many members of various scattered congregations, who expatriated themselves to the Netherlands from the coasts of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk; Robinson probably attaching himself to the largest body of emigrants; the rest going before, or following as they best could. In passages quoted by Mr. Fletcher in his History of Independency, the date of Robinson's departure to Holland is placed in the spring of 1603. According to Young, he did not leave Norwich till 1604. He then repaired to a village in Nottinghamshire, called Scrooby, where he officiated as minister to a private congregation, meeting in the house of William Brewster, a gentleman of fortune, who in after years was himself one of the Pilgrim Fathers. Bradford, who belonged to this congregation, speaks of it as being "composed of persons from towns and villages" . . . "on the borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire."* Morton calls them "goodly Christians from the north of England;"† but this was a mistake easily made by one writing at a great distance from this country. Be this as it may, in 1607 or 1608, Robinson, after seeing to the safety of a large body of emigrants who took their departure before him, arrived in Holland and settled at Amsterdam, from whence in about a year he removed to Leyden. Here his church seems to have been increased by further arrivals from the shores of England; and when we recollect the tyrannous system that was being pursued by James and his venal clergy, the nearness of our eastern shores to Holland, and the intimate connexion that had then for centuries existed between the two countries, all surprise ceases. We could fill our little volume with interesting detail pertaining to this curious connexion. In the Middle Ages, Holland was the source whence the churches of Lincolnshire received their unrivalled brasses and painted glass, and the monasteries their filigreed silver and ornamental ironwork.‡ Holland was one of the channels through which Italy poured her treasures of art into

* Samson's Address, p. 9.

† New England's Memorial, p. 17.

‡ Preface to Cotman's Sepulchral Brasses.

England. At this day Norfolk is the very shrine of Dutch art. No London gallery possesses such treasures, in this peculiar branch of painting, as may be seen in some of its country mansions; and in solitary houses, hidden in the broad marshland, may be found single specimens of the great Dutch masters—Cuyp, Hobbema, Ruysdael, Teniers, or Wouvermans—of unique beauty. In old houses and cottages yet linger a profusion of Dutch earthenware, formed when Dutch fictile art was at its best. In cottage chests are still extant specimens of the matchless linen of the Netherlands; and even so late as the close of the last century, it was no uncommon thing for a Dutch burgomaster to come across the seas to a wedding or a christening. All these things show the intimate relation between the shores of Holland and those left by the Pilgrim Fathers.

Thus for conscience' sake did these scattered congregations remove "to a country," says one of their old chroniclers, "which they knew not but by hearsay, where they must learn a new language, and get their living they knew not how, seeing they were not acquainted with trades and traffic, but had only been used to a plain country life and the innocent trade of husbandry. Yet they had courage to make it, for they rested on God's providence." * Robinson, whose character cannot be too highly estimated, acted both as pastor and friend to the poor emigrants, and before leaving Amsterdam he consigned his pastoral charge into the hands of Mr. Brewster, the friend of Bradford. When he had been settled in Leyden some little time, Robinson made the acquaintance of Henry Jacob, who, as we have seen, had gone to Middelburgh, in Zealand, in 1599. Here, conversing together, Jacob embraced Robinson's opinions upon Church government; and, returning to London in 1616, he formed a separate congregation similar to those he had seen in Holland. It was through this acquaintanceship, therefore, that the connexion between the Pilgrim Fathers and the church in Southwark arose; as there can be no doubt that those who went from the Thames in the *Mayflower* were in a measure composed of the members of Jacob's congregation—or the church in Southwark. There is something eminently characteristic of Puritan faith and resolve in the initiatory proceedings of this little congregation; for being convened and consenting to unite with him (Henry Jacob) in church fellowship, they laid the foundation of what has *been considered* the first Independent, or Congregational church in England. The priority of this church has been questioned, but without success. He and his friends appointed a day of solemn fasting and prayer for blessing on their undertaking, which being observed, "towards the close of the solemnity, each of them made open confession of faith in Jesus Christ, then standing together, they joined hands, and solemnly covenanted together with each other in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all God's ways

* Young's Chronicles of Pilgrim Fathers, p. 25.

† Hanbury's Memorials, vol. i. p. 292.

and ordinances as He had always revealed, or should further make known to them." But if by a church be meant a body of Christians assembled together for religious worship, this could most certainly be not the first, as we have already seen that several churches based on Independent principles had been gathered together in



FORMATION OF NONCONFORMIST CHURCH.

Queen Elizabeth's reign. With respect to a building devoted to public worship, none as yet could have been erected, for the site of Winchester Park was unbuilt upon; and persecution was too systematic for the Puritans to convene themselves for other than the most secret worship, probably in each other's dwellings, and in such various

* Hanbury's Memorials, vol. i. p. 292.

parts of the then narrow limits of Southwark as were best suited to the exigencies of the time. They were moving from place to place even so late as 1641. This assembly, however, was strictly *the Church* in Southwark.

The date of the erection of the old Meeting-House in Deadman's Place, cannot be ascertained. It may have been erected in the time of the Protectorate, when the Independents were in ascendancy, or upon the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672; though the former period is the more likely. Mr. Wilson, usually so accurate in such points, does not give the date. It seems, however, to have been a spacious building, built of timber, the galleries being approached by an external stair, and was in existence till 1788, when its congregation having removed to Union Street, it was pulled down, and Thrale's Brewery erected on its site. But the old burial-ground, a Puritan *Campo Santo* in its day, still remains. There are other obscure matters in relation to this hidden old place in Southwark, such as more than one separation of its worshippers—from one of these, on the question of baptism, the English Baptists date their origin—and the existence of a Presbyterian, as well as a second Independent congregation, upon which it is needless for us to enter. It is to the doctrinal antiquary that such questions belong.

In the meanwhile, the various religious controversies rife in Holland between—'

"Partners in faith and brothers in distress"

do not seem to have disturbed the peace of the larger body of exiles. They thought, with their pastor Robinson, that the Church of England was not a "true visible Church," and entire separation from it justifiable; and they, therefore, according to Morton, "continued divers years in a comfortable condition, enjoying much sweet society and spiritual comfort in the ways of God, living peaceably among themselves, and being courteously entertained, and largely respected by the Dutch, amongst whom they were strangers."* It is not known by whom the idea was suggested, possibly by Robinson himself, of an emigration of the exiles to North America. The project was by no means a new one, as several Puritan families had, as early as 1608, emigrated from England to Virginia, and it may have been, that the intense interest excited in that day by all matters relating to this, as yet almost unknown land; the spirit of adventure natural to their race; and their residence amidst a maritime population, like the Dutch, gave simultaneous rise to the same idea in many minds. Once broached, it was gravely and earnestly considered, in what appears to have been an open congregation; "for although," says Morton, "they did greatly and sweetly enjoy their Church liberties under the States, yet they foresaw that Holland could be no place for their Church and posterity to continue in comfortably, at least in that measure they hoped to find abroad."† Their reasons were various, and important. Many of the

* Morton, *New England Memorial*, p. i. Edit. 1669.

† Ibid. p. 3.

exiles had died, some were becoming aged ; the climate was ungenial, the means of procuring a livelihood few and precarious ; others were "unable to endure the great labour and hard fare," and so left their brethren, "as it were weeping, as Orpah did her mother-in-law Naomi, or as those Romans did Cato in Utica, who desired to be excused and borne with, though they could not be all Catos."* The language was different, their children were bowed by heavy labour and made decrepit thereby, and their intense desire to preserve their nationality, seem to have been causes next in importance to the question of religion itself. From these motives, therefore, collectively, the desire for emigration arose, and gradually strengthened.

Virginia was, as we have seen, already thinly peopled by English ; and a company called by its name had been in existence some years. To a branch of this company stationed in London, John Carver and Robert Cushman, the two of their body sent by the Leyden Congregation to England, addressed themselves on the subject of the most northern parts of Virginia, as a place of occupation for the exiles, "who were 'restless' to live once more under the government of their native land. They found God along with them, and through the influence of Sir Edwin Sandys, a gentleman well known to them, a patent might at once have been taken, had not the envoys desired first to consult the 'multitude' at Leyden."† It may not be irrelevant to remark in passing, that this mention of the name of Sandys, shows the intimate connexion yet kept up between the exiles and their friends. The Brewsters had been tenants of the Sandys family at Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire ; and this Sir Edwin Sandys was, there is little doubt, a son of Dr. Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, who, in 1576, granted long leases of the manor and palace of Scrooby to one of his sons, by this means alienating the property from the see. For this, and other similar acts of simony, he was severely censured. Some few fragments of Brewster's house yet remain.‡ In December, 1617, the Pilgrims transmitted their request, signed by the hands of the greatest part of the congregation. "We are well weaned," added Robinson and Brewster, "from the delicate milk of our mother-country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land ; the people are industrious and frugal. We are knit together as a body, in a most sacred covenant of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good and the whole. It is not with us, as with men whom small things can discourage."

When this document had been received, Carver and Cushman petitioned, through the agency of the Virginian Company, King James, for liberty of conscience, to be confirmed by his seal. To do this he seemed willing, as he considered, that to advance the dominions of England was "a good and honest notion ; and fishing was

* Young, pp. 45, 87.

† Bancroft, Hist. of United States, vol. i. p. 230.

‡ Hunter, Pilgrim Fathers.

an honest trade, the Apostles' own calling ;" but his bishops interfered. They inquired of the messengers, "who shall make your ministers?" and the answer was quite sufficient to defeat the negotiation: "the power of making them is in the Church." As no appeal could disarm the bigotry of Abbot and Laud, the latter then rapidly advancing from his chrysalis condition to one of irresponsible power, and the Puritans, at that moment, being "harried," either to conform or quit the kingdom, Cushman and Carver returned to Leyden, strong in their determination not to entangle themselves with the bishops, "for," said they, "if there should afterwards be a purpose to wrong us, though we had a seal as broad as the house-floor, there would be means enough found to recall or reverse it."*

Unmoved in their determination, two other agents were sent over in the February of the succeeding year, 1619, who were successful in procuring a patent, under the seal of the Virginian Company, though it proved useless, as the person in whose name it was taken failed, from some cause, to accompany the adventurers. This matter settled, the patent was sent over to the Leyden Congregation, with certain "proposals for their transmigration," and it was at once resolved to prepare for the voyage. But there yet remained difficulties; want of capital was the greatest. This was eventually overcome, by the formation of a partnership between certain English merchants and the intended Pilgrims, though much to the disadvantage of the latter. This was forgotten in the one grand hope of securing their civil and religious freedom. For it is with the individual, as it is with nations; invest him with a lofty purpose, a noble aim, an exalted idea, and all difficulties fall before his resolute will, as ripened corn beneath the sickle.

" Men they were who could not bend ;
 Blest Pilgrims, surely as they took for guide
 A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified ;
 Blest while their spirits from the wood ascend,
 Along a Galaxy that knows no end
 But in His glory, who for sinners died."

Preparations were now made, both in Holland and in England, for the departure of the Pilgrims. Whilst the Leyden congregation procured a small vessel of about sixty tons, named the *Speedwell*, and stored it, as it lay in Delft Haven, from whence they were to embark, the English merchants purchased a vessel, in the port of London, of one hundred and eighty tons burden, named the *Mayflower*. This was unquestionably filled by emigrants from various parts of England, and by a portion of the members of the Church in Southwark; for though there was a difference between the rigid Puritans, as represented by Jacob, and the Leyden exiles, it was on the question

* Bancroft, vol. i. p. 231.

† Wordsworth, Ecclesiastical Sonnets.

of separation from the Church of England. In relation to the principles of congregational independency they had similar views, and could coalesce in the adventure about to be undertaken. In one of Young's Chronicles it is said pointedly, "the bigger ship came from London . . . with all the rest of the company."* This is, therefore, the link that connects the Church in Southwark with the Pilgrim Fathers; a link proudly acknowledged by their many million descendants at this hour; our brothers in race and name—our coheirs in nationality and language!

What, then, has either equalled or excelled, in all history, in all time, this simple fact, that a little shipful of persecuted men, borne out by our great river, should return by it two centuries after, not as a man, not in a single day, but in all days, and as a nation till recently prosperous and free; bestowing the wealth of the earth, receiving it in return, and stepping upon our shores, as men step upon their fatherland. Yet courageous and independent as they were, the creed of the Pilgrim Fathers was, in many essential points, bigoted and exclusive. They made independency of worship their plea for leaving their native land; yet they denied the same liberty to others when their day of power came. Isolation, as well as great material success, increased this self-assuming spirit of righteousness; and there can be little doubt, lying far down in those days of early Puritanism, are the germs of the present secession, which every true English man and woman must deplore. Whatever may be the result of this unhappy struggle, we can feel no other than as friends to this great nation, and can wish no other than for the recurrence of those times—

"When free as sea or wind
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And oceans join whom they did first divide.
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.†

The English at Leyden, trusting in God, had, in the interval, made ready for departure. A small bark like the *Speedwell* could but convey a portion of the exiles; the youngest and strongest, therefore, were chosen, headed by Brewster; their pastor, Robinson, remaining behind, with the majority of his congregation, till another opportunity of departure came. A solemn fast was then held. "Let us seek of God," said they, "a right way for us and our little ones, and all our substance."‡ Robinson then delivered a farewell address, "breathing," says Bancroft, "a freedom of opinion, and an independence of authority, such as then were hardly known in the world."† The Pilgrims then repaired to Delft Haven, and embarked, "amid a flood of tears," recorded Edward Winslow, "... and abundance of sorrow to part." But "they

* P. 89.

† Pope's Windsor Forest.

‡ Hist. United States, vol. i. p. 231.

knew," wrote their historian, Morton, in affecting and memorable words, "that they were pilgrims and strangers here below, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, where *God had prepared for them a city*, and thus quieted their spirits." *

Favoured by a prosperous wind, the *Speedwell* soon reached Southampton, where the *Mayflower* lay ready, and in a fortnight both vessels departed for America. But they were not long out at sea, before it was found needful to return for repairs to the *Speedwell*. These accomplished in the port of Dartmouth, they again set forth. But the captain of the *Speedwell*, dismayed at the prospect of such a voyage, pretended that his ship was unfit for sea, and so put back into Plymouth harbour. The *Mayflower* thus set forth alone on her solitary way, the 6th day of September, 1620, and after a long and perilous voyage, and a mistake in their destination, the Pilgrim Fathers, on Monday, December 11th, landed on the shores of New England.

"There unto life an infant nation springs,
There falls the iron from the soul,
There Liberty's young accents roll,
Up to the King of Kings;
To far creation's farthest bound
That thrilling summons yet shall sound—
The dreaming nations shall awake
And to their centre earth's old kingdoms shake.
Pontiff and prince, your sway
Must crumble from that day,
Before the loftier throne of heaven;
The hand is raised, the pledge is given—
One monarch to obey, one creed to own,
That monarch God; that creed His word alone." †

We can pursue the history of the Pilgrims no further. Great errors marked their religious policy, but it was in consequence of their own defective views, and not inherent in the great principles they advocated. It requires a high period of enlightenment to define what *is*, and what *is not*, error. If, as we believe, this definition is not *yet* arrived at, what might be expected in an age far less advanced than our own? But the principles on which their religious tenets were founded contained inherently the sublimest doctrines of civil and religious freedom, and therefore, as they advanced, their divergencies grew less and less, till New England became the resting place of the oppressed and persecuted from all the corners of the earth. Their shortcomings must teach us a lesson; whilst their heroism, their self-sacrifice, their patient endeavour, must ever enlist the sympathies and command the admiration of mankind. Robinson did not live to reach America, "where," as he said, "his heart was." He

* New England Memorials, p. 6, edit. 1669.

† Boston Commemoration Ode.

died at Leyden in 1625, to the great grief^s of all, but especially of those, who, on the shores of the New World, waited for his ministry. His views were imperfect, as he countenanced the authority of the magistrate in matters of religion, and unfortunately his congregation carried with them to their new country this erroneous opinion. Otherwise, as it was said, he was "a man not easily to be paralleled."

We must say a few more words with respect to the Church in Southwark. Henry Jacob emigrated to Virginia in 1624, where he shortly afterwards died. He was succeeded by John Lathrop, who, in April, 1632, was apprehended with thirty-two of his congregation, and imprisoned for two years. Upon his release he proceeded with thirty of his congregation to New England, and settled in the wilderness at a place called Scituate, upon Cape Cod. His successor in Southwark was Mr. John Canne, who, during the early part of his ministry, was assisted by Mr. Henry Jesse. It was at this period that the secession took place upon the question of baptism, to which we have already referred. After these succeeded Mr. Samuel Howe, during whose ministry the Church suffered so much from persecution as to often necessitate its members to meet for worship in the woods and fields round London. Howe himself was cited in the Spiritual courts, excommunicated, and finally shut up in close prison, where he died. An attempt was made to bury him in Shoreditch churchyard, but the parish officers prevented it. He was then interred in a piece of waste ground at Anniseed Clear, or more properly speaking, St. Agnes le Clair, a celebrated well near Finsbury Fields, of which we shall see more in our next chapter. After this the ministerial office devolved, evidently through the necessities of the time, upon one of the deacons of the congregation, a Mr. Stephen More, a man of substance and position in the City of London. He willingly accepted the office, though at the risk of both liberty and fortune. It was at this period that the Long Parliament commenced its memorable legislation, so that "this poor congregation," says Neal, "which had subsisted almost by a miracle for above twenty-four years, *shifting from place to place*, to avoid the notice of the public, ventured to open their doors in Deadman's Place, in Southwark, January 18, 1640-1."* Soon after this they were disturbed during Divine service by the marshal of the King's Bench, and committed to the adjacent Clink; this act, of course resulting from the antagonism between Parliament and those who still held many of the smaller executive offices—for to say nothing of the tendency of the vulgar to abuse the authority intrusted to their hands, both the king, and even Laud from his dungeon in the Tower, continued yet for a little season to misuse the prerogatives an unhappy nation had placed in their ministering hands. The next day six or seven of the imprisoned congregation were carried before the House of Lords, and charged with denying the King's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, and with

* Vol. ii. p. 342.

preaching in separate congregations. The latter they confessed ; with respect to the former, they declared, with a spirit worthy of the principles they advocated, "that they acknowledged no other head of the Church but Christ ; that they considered no prince on earth had power to make laws to bind the conscience, and that such laws as were contrary to the laws of God, ought not to be obeyed." "Such a declaration," adds Neal quaintly, "a twelvemonth ago might have cost them their ears,"* but they were briefly dismissed with a reprimand, and on the succeeding Sabbath several of the peers visited their church in Deadman's Place. These lords were most likely in the first instance merely prompted by curiosity, but they wisely "remained to pray," contributed to the collection for the poor, and would have visited the church again, but for their evident fear of public opinion. Through the reigns of Charles II. and James II. the congregation suffered greatly from persecution. After the Fire of London there was a temporary lull. It was at this period, probably, that the old timber Meeting-House was erected, in whose pulpit Richard Baxter preached in 1677, for several months, whilst the congregation, owing to the death of Mr. Wadsworth, were temporarily without a pastor. Since that period to the present, there has been a succession of faithful ministers, and the congregation, now occupying a chapel in Union Street, Southwark, promise at no distant day to worship in a more fitting and public edifice, and one more worthy of their own religious association with the imperishable names of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Since the time the *Mayflower* passed along its tide, the shores of the Thames near London are vastly changed. Thousands of houses cover the site of the once green gardens of the Bankside, though its name will be coexistent with Shakespeare's glory and Shakespeare's poetry. Bermondsey's mill-streams are no longer pleasant, and tanners' pits, and docks, and warehouses, and human dwellings cover its old demesne, and miles beyond ; the opposite shore, Shadwell and Wapping, picturesque and green enough in old Stow's time, are equally thick strewn with population, with docks, and shipping, and with the hived treasures of the earth ; old London Bridge is gone, with its starlings, its terrific cascades, its overhanging houses, which, as Pennant said, "were frightful to behold ;" the old Custom House is gone and its two successors, and a grander St. Paul's overlooks the now vastest city of the earth. If we miss some pleasantness and pleasant things, the old race of watermen, a purer stream, and fleets of swans "oft washt with silver Thames," a greener margin, a less smoke-beclouded sky, we have countless and equivalent blessings. We must go onward ; we must secure others. The principle of *laissez faire* is neither for our race, nor our time. The old Puritan blood flows in our veins ; we are recognisable children of our illustrious parents. Like them, if God be with us, we shall in peace and amity secure advanced

interpretation of immortal truths ; and elicit for humanity some few of the exhaustless beneficences which God holds for us in his bounteous hand. We shall do this, for we have given signs !

Then, as civilization advances, and advance it will, we shall purify—as most assuredly we shall embank and purify our “royal towered Thames”—many opinions and many errors of the world. Till countless ships going and returning with the ebb and flow of our great river, shall not only take and bring material, merchandise, and treasure, but recipient and more priceless things. In the exquisite words of Sir John Denham, who sung the glory of our great river two hundred years ago—

“ As a wise king first settles fruitful peace
In his own realms ; and with their rich increase
Seeks wars abroad, and then in triumph brings
The spoils of kingdoms and the crowns of kings,
So Thames to London . . . ” *

Our spoils will be the simple and prolific ones of peace ; our crown that of infusing into other nations a love of civil and religious freedom, as ardent, yet as wisely tempered and enlightened as our own. This crown we may bring and wear, for it will be worthy of us, and the fathers whose children we are.

* Cooper's Hill, edit. 1642.

CHAPTER X.

BUNHILL FIELDS.—GREATNESS IN ITS DUST.



"DEATH," says Bacon, in one of his exquisite Essays, "openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy, . . . above all, believe it, when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations, the sweetest canticle is 'Nunc Dimittis.'" So those whose dust we are about to reverently honour ; to whose noble lives and sincere faith we are about to testify ; to whose works, spiritual truth, and civil and religious freedom owe perpetual acknowledgment ; and who, having thus achieved "worthy ends," could truly say in the sublime words of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." We have no gloomy thoughts of death, we have no homily to preach thereon ; we rest in perfect and in fullest faith upon the Will of the Divine ; and so our duty, in leading others to these ancient graves, is to verify the solemn dust which lies therein, through the narrative of impartial truth ; and this we shall not do, even whilst admitting shortcomings and errors of judgment, imperfections in otherwise perfect men, without effects, that like perennial flowers, shall deck each grave, and render beautiful the "Sacred Field."

Our landscape is but a small one, and will need but little painting. We have already seen that a great breadth of fen, in some parts moor, lay, in ancient times, immediately behind the walls of London to the north. There is no doubt but that the Romans had a causeway and roads across it ; yet for centuries it seems to have

been little more than a desolate swamp, useful as a safeguard to the city walls, but for little else, save to the adventurous fowler or fisher, for it contained a fishery for the use of the City, and in winter-time to those "crowds of young men" who, as Fitzstephen records, "went forth to take diversion on the ice." The first sign of coming change was in 1415. The then mayor, Thomas Falconer, "caused," says Stow, "the wall of the City to be broken near unto Coleman Street, and there builded a postern now called Moorgate, upon the moorside, where there was never gate before. This gate he made for the ease of the citizens that way to pass upon causeways into the field, for their recreation, for the same field was at the same time a marish."* Yet nearly a century elapsed before any attempt was made to drain it. In 1511, the third year of the reign of Henry VIII., dikes and bridges were made, and the ground levelled, yet so imperfectly as to leave it still little other than a bog overgrown with "flags, sedges, and rushes."† Sixteen years afterwards, in 1527, the City of London again took the drainage of Moorfields in hand; the gathered waters being conveyed into the Walbrook, a clear and winding brook when William the Conqueror bestowed it upon the Canons of St. Martin's le Grand. In the meanwhile, many gardens had sprung up without the postern of Moorgate, possibly on the nearest available spots, for in 1498, a large number were destroyed "about and beyond the lordship of Finsbury," to make "a plain field for archers to shoot in." Of the Manor or Court of Finsbury, little is known. It is mentioned in a survey made of it in 1567, and was, we should think, originally, a solitary outlying farm, erected possibly, from the attachment of the word "bury," on the site of some Roman villa, and which, as the adjacent fen became drained, incorporated portions of it for pasturage. This farm had three great fields belonging to it, named in the old survey, "Bonhill Field," "Mallow Field," and "High Field, . . . commonly called Finsbury Field." Bonhill, or Bunhill Field, being, as we have already seen, the southernmost, and formed, of course, by the drainage of the fen. Finsbury Field, which lay to the north of Bunhill, was celebrated for "three windmills erected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, on a deposit made of" more than one thousand cart-loads of bones removed from the charnel of Old St. Paul's, when that building was destroyed in 1549, by order of the Duke of Somerset. On these bones, "the soilage of the City," as Stow calls it, was subsequently laid, and the three windmills, "in short space after raised."‡ In fact, till the beginning of the reign of James I., Finsbury, as Strype says, was but a "noisome place," being nothing less than the continued receptacle for the filth of the City through many previous generations.

But in its original condition, the Manor House, or Finsbury Farm, as it was called, which stood somewhere near the present Chiswell Street, must have been a pleasant

* Strype's Stow, b. i. p. 17. † Ibid. b. iv. p. 101. ‡ Ibid. b. iv. p. 102. Cunningham, p. 557.

place enough. It possessed a "great barn, a gatehouse, stables, a court, and orchard," * and was the property of the prebends of Halliwell and Finsbury, in the Cathedral of St. Paul's. Whether let or tenanted by themselves, there is no evidence. Near at hand were the beautiful fields of "Iseldon and Hoxton," the celebrated well or spring of St. Agnes le Clair, and "Peerless Pool," or as it was called in the time of Stow, "Perillous Pond," on account of many drowned therein whilst bathing. It was fed by a spring originally of great volume, "that overflowing its banks, caused a dangerous pond." † The spring still exists as a bath in Old Street Road.

Notwithstanding these various efforts to improve the great fen, it remained, in part, at least, but an indifferent place till 1606, when it was finally drained, and that portion of it which became in 1622 the New Artillery Ground, was planted with trees, the grass railed in to keep it from being trodden down, and pleasant walks formed across and around it. These improvements cost the City of London 5,000*l*. From this latter date, therefore, suburban houses were built here and there, though it was not till the latter end of the reign of Charles II. that any signs of modern Finsbury arose. At that date, about the period of the death of Milton, it began to be rapidly built over.

The Plague of 1665 raged, as we have seen, more fearfully in Cripplegate than elsewhere. It began there with the first outbreak of the pestilence, and only ceased at its close. There were reasons enough, we think, for this. The miasma of the great fen still lingered there, and does in a degree to this day. Any intelligent person, or one at all acquainted with a fen country, could at once tell, if passing through Finsbury Square or the City Road, that both had been built over a morass; the atmosphere is so totally unlike that of all other parts of London. We have constantly observed this. At the time of the Great Plague, therefore, matters must have been much worse, as many open ditches, and other nuisances complained of by Stow, still undoubtedly remained.

The inhabitants of Cripplegate thus dying by hundreds, the ordinary churchyards were soon filled, and it was found necessary to form a common receptacle for the dead. A spot was therefore chosen to the north of the Artillery Ground, and a huge pit dug, known as the Finsbury Pit. It was this probably that Pepys, whose curiosity was astounding, went to see, under the date of August 30th, 1665. "I went forth and walked to Moorfields, to see (God forgive my presumption) whether I could see any dead corpse going to the grave, but, as God would have it, did not. But, Lord, how everybody looks and discourses in the street of death, and nothing else; and few people going up and down, that the town is like a place distressed and forsaken." It was of this pit, "then lying open to the fields," that De Foe tells the

* Strype's Stow, b. iv. p. 101.

† Cunningham, p. 389.

horrible story of a dead-cart slipping in, dragging with it the horses, and overwhelming the wretched driver, whose whip could be seen sticking out from among the dead. In this, as in the other plague-pits, the infected came in their delirium and threw themselves. As there was no possibility of rescuing them, it was found necessary to watch the place both day and night.*

As soon as the dire pestilence was over, the pit was covered and walled in, "at the sole charge of the City of London," as an inscription over the western entrance still shows. For a time it may have been left to its solitude, for the associations connected with it were of a very painful kind; yet for this reason of being disliked or avoided, it probably was, that many of those who in life had been imprisoned and persecuted for conscience' sake, and when dead often denied burial in the ordinary churchyards, were brought to find a grave. To us there is something touching in the thought that those who in life had nobly asserted that liberty of faith, liberty of opinion, liberty as citizens and subjects, were the right of *all* men, mingled their dust at last with the unrecognised dust of countless thousands. Thus willing, even in the grave, to let the Christian law of equality prevail!

At length, after the corporation of London had permitted the burial of many Dissenters, the ground was leased by a person of the name of Tindal. It then became known as "Tindal's Burial Ground," as previously it had been called the "New Burial Ground." Dunton, in his "Life and Errors," speaks of it by this latter name. It thus became what Southey terms it, the "Campo Santo of the Dissenters," being devoted to the burial of Nonconformists only. Its present appearance does exceeding credit to the Dissenters of London. It seems well kept and well cared for; and, seriously speaking, has a more *cheerful* aspect than all else beside in the dull regions of Finsbury. As jewels are worth keeping in fair caskets, so is the dust of Bunyan and De Foe amidst pleasant greenness and reverent and comely order.

We can attempt no catalogue, or consecutive history of the dead. Here, as elsewhere, the larger number of men, must, in the words of the author of "Religio Medici," "be content to be unremembered." Good deeds, and active service in the cause of truth, are no security against oblivion; and even the sod of Bunhill, covers in, as other graveyards do, pregnant histories that had been worthy of all preservation. But the true heroism of our lives is to endure, to serve, to fulfil, to patiently hope and wait; and that which has been forgotten by men will appear as effects in the issues of an eternal and all-pervading justice.

As early as the year 1671—and this shows how soon Bunhill Fields had become the *Campo Santo* of the Nonconformists—a Puritan minister, named Edward Bagshaw, was buried here. Between this year and 1662 he had been imprisoned in the

* Memoirs of Plague, pp. 90, 91, 254.

Gatehouse, in Westminster; at Southsea Castle, near Portsmouth; in the Tower, whither he was sent direct from a personal interview with Charles II.; and lastly, after a period of liberation, to Newgate, for refusing to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, where he died, after an imprisonment of twenty-two weeks. In 1673, John Loder, pastor to an Independent congregation gathered during the Protectorate, and of which Philip Nye was teacher, was interred here. Also in 1677, William Hook, one of Cromwell's chaplains; and in 1679, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, styled by Wood one of the atlases and patriarchs of Independency.

We have already referred to Dr. Goodwin in connexion with the Assembly of Divines, and the Apologetical Narration. He was born at Rollesby, in Norfolk, in 1600, and educated at Cambridge, where he spent six years. Indoctrinated with some tinge of Puritanism, he was, whilst yet a Cambridge student, the subject of one of those psycho-physical changes, which, at that date, were styled "convictions;" but the dark hour passed away, and the young Puritan found, to use Calamy's words, "that the disposition of his soul was changed, and his spirit clothed with a new nature."* In 1628, he was chosen to the Lectureship at Trinity Church, Cambridge, though not without opposition from Bishop Beveridge. In 1634, being dissatisfied with the terms of conformity, he left the University and his preferments; and a few years later, to avoid persecution, he went to Holland, and settled as pastor of the English Church, at Arnheim. At the beginning of the Long Parliament he returned, and being elected a member of the Assembly of Divines, his services were of eminent use, both in conjunction with the other Independents in the Assembly, and with regard to the authorship of the Apologetical Narration, in ultimately affecting public opinion, though immediate results did little to lessen the hostility of the Presbyterians. Hence the claims of the "five dissenting brethren," of which, as we have seen, Dr. Goodwin was one, to the gratitude and admiration of posterity. Though in some respects imperfect, their views were far in advance of their age; and the dawn does not more surely prelude the day, than the opinions of these admirable men, the more perfect and philosophic ones of Locke. In the meanwhile, Dr. Goodwin gathered together an Independent congregation in the parish of St. Dunstan's, in Thames Street.† In 1647, he had an idea of removing to New England, and had proceeded so far in his intention as to ship a portion of his splendid library; but through the persuasion of his friends, who probably foresaw the rapidly approaching limits of Presbyterian influence, he changed his intention. In 1649, he was, through the interest of Cromwell, made one of the Triers of Ministers, and President of Magdalen College, Oxford. Both appointments were inconsistent with such genuine principles of Independency, as Milton, John Goodwin, and some few others were enlightened

* Nonconformist Memorial, vol. i. p. 184.

† Wilson's Dissenting Churches, vol. i. p. 217.

enough to advocate. For "the power with which they (the Triers) were invested, was as much a civil and religious wrong, as that which was formerly exercised by the Court of High Commission," and the acceptance of office in any way connected with emolument and State patronage, was not to be neutralized either by the private excellence of men like Goodwin, and Owen, or by their attempt to combine official duties and congregational ministry. The Independents were thus divided; those repudiating all alliance between civil power, place, and emolument, and religious duties, being considered to hold extreme views. "But," says Mr. Fletcher, excellently, "if the Independents of this period had been united on a proper basis; if they had known and faithfully advocated the whole length of their own principles; if they had stood entirely aloof from all connexion with the State in their religious capacity; if they had refused to receive any of the emoluments formerly appropriated by the Anglican hierarchy; if they had thus done their best to instruct both rulers and ruled, by example as well as by precept, in the great principles of civil justice and religious freedom; the impartiality of their demeanour could not have failed to secure the admiration of their country, and the advancement of their principles in succeeding years, even though it might not have averted the perils which afterwards overtook them, and in which, for a season, their own liberties and those of the nation were overwhelmed." *

But not through his meekness or his goodness, by the worth of his principles, or by his shortcomings in relation to their practical advocacy, is Thomas Goodwin so well known to posterity, as by his connexion with Cromwell's death-bed scene. By that class of writers who style Puritanism "canting," and "hypocritical;" who look only at its worst features, its mere outside husk, and not at the vital light within, Cromwell's question about grace, and Dr. Goodwin's earnest prayers for the preservation of the great soldier and statesman, have been alike set down as either matter for wonder or ridicule. We see nothing for either. The theological ideas of the time were deeply tinged by the Calvinistic belief in "foreknowledge, will, and fate;" and one who, like Cromwell, believed that some persons more than others were the elect of God; that there is a "state of grace" in this life, and its contingent state hereafter, would, lying on a dying bed, naturally question one presumed to be so profoundly versed in such matters as Dr. Goodwin—for he, far more than Howe or Owen, was Calvinistic in opinion. On the other hand, the making Deity personal in all sublunary matters was a feature of Puritanism, and one in which Goodwin, from his meditative character, had, what Calamy calls "enthusiastical confidence." That the Protector's life was earnestly prayed for, seeing what contingencies hung upon its ending or continuance, no one can doubt, who knows anything of the history of

* Hist. of Independency, vol. iv. pp. 185, 186.

either of the men or the time ; or that when the sun of those mighty fortunes was set, lament was made that prayer had been ineffectual to preserve and save.

Soon after the Restoration, Dr. Goodwin was dismissed from his Presidentship at Oxford. His period of duty there had been marked by great diligence, piety, and general excellence. "His candid and ingenuous behaviour, and his catholic charity for good men of different persuasions, gained him the esteem of those who had been most averse to his promotion. In conferring places of preferment, he was not biassed by party motives, real merit being the sole standard of his conduct." * The condition in which Goodwin and Owen found Oxford upon their promotion, and the state in which they left it, is noble evidence of their capacity, learning, and piety. Some of Dr. Goodwin's Church it is said, followed him to London. Here he preached as opportunity permitted. At first, as it appears, in Fetter Lane, then in a Meeting-house erected in Paved Alley, Lime Street, the site of which, till recently, was covered by a wing of the East India House, and as it seems finally, to a congregation that had been gathered together by Mr. Joseph Caryll, in Duke's Place, St. Mary's Axe. To this he was the predecessor of Dr. Owen.

During his latter residence in London, Dr. Goodwin occupied a house somewhere in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great.† For some reason his library seems to have been divided—his theological books being in his own keeping, and the rest stored, as we have seen, in a house in Bread Street. These latter, to the value of 500*l.*, perished through the sheer negligence of a person, who, before the Fire had reached Cheapside, had been instructed to remove them. Upon learning this, his remark was, "God had indeed struck him in a very sensible part ; and acknowledged it as a rebuke of Providence, as he had loved his library too much, but he was thankful that the loss fell upon the books of human learning."‡ Probably as a method of soothing his scholarly regret, he composed and preached that *same* week, his celebrated sermon "Patience and its Perfect Work under Sudden and Sore Tryals." It is very rare and unique, but, unfortunately, contains little either to the purpose or that is extractable. What Calamy says of Dr. Goodwin's style is perfectly true ; "it is very diffuse, homely, and tedious." Unlike the writings of Baxter, Owen, and Howe, no golden grains reward the reader's toil through a sea of theological "foreknowledge, will, and fate ;" it is all well meant, but dry and barren. One would think that a dire calamity like the Fire of London might have gifted the lips of even an ordinary man, and that the depths of the human heart unsealed by suffering, poetry would have poured thence as water from the rock at the bidding of the prophet. We will quote the *most* eloquent passage. "When you are sunk and overwhelmed with troubles, when you have nothing to stand or lean upon, but all

* Wilson's Hist. of Dissenting Churches, vol. i. p. 218.

† Ibid. vol. iii. p. 430.

‡ Nonconformist's Memorial, vol. i. p. 187.

about you falls with you and under you, so, as in all outward appearance, you are sunk and overwhelmed with the ruins. . . .

"In that case count it ALL JOY, to shout as men in harvest, or that have gotten great spoyles ; when their miseries are so great, that they cannot be endured, that yet their joy must be so great as cannot be expressed. This is the hardest duty that ever was required of the distressed hearts of men. And yet God would not require it, if it were not attainable ; and it is attainable by no other principles but of Christianity. And argues that our Christian religion hath so spiritfull and sovraign a vertue in it, that it is able to raise spirits up, unto thus high and glorious a pitch, and perfection in this life. . . . Let patience have its perfect work, and it will make you perfect."*

Dr. Thomas Goodwin died February 23, 1679, and was buried in Bunhill Fields. A low altar-tombstone covers his remains, on which a lengthened Latin epitaph records his excellencies and Christian services, as well as tells us that—

"His writings
The noblest monuments of this great man's praise
Will diffuse his name in a more fragrant odour
Than that of the richest perfume,
To flourish in those far distant ages
When this marble, inscribed with his just honour
Shall have dropped into dust."

We differ in opinion from this hyperbole—so far as literary merit is concerned—but, for the rest, we believe that as long as Englishmen shall value spiritual freedom, as long as their national history is a thing to be proud of, as long as they take from its errors their best warning, from its excellencies their best example, so long as the predecessors of Locke shall be valued for what Locke accomplished, so long will this good and admirable man, with other good and admirable men, be well remembered !

In passing, it may be desirable to recollect the dust, as well as memory, of a Puritan minister named Gosnold, who died the year previously to Dr. Goodwin. He was a scholar of the Charter-house School, and of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and seems to have been a man of first-rate ability. He was a Baptist, and gathered a congregation in Paul's Alley, on the south side of the Barbican, in a building originally intended for a playhouse. Here he had often as many as three thousand auditors—a vast congregation if we recollect—amongst whom were usually seven or eight clergymen of the Established Church, in their gowns. Tillotson was also a great admirer of Gosnold, and frequently occupied a hidden seat beneath the gallery. The Church was often scattered through persecution, and as often gathered together. In 1754, one of the deacons of this Church was Mr. Allen Evans, so celebrated for his contest

* *Patience and its Perfect Work*, edit. 1666, pp. 7, 8, 15.

with the City of London, in the question relating to the election of sheriffs. In the September of that year the congregation of this Church opened a subscription for defending such gentlemen as might be prosecuted for nonserving the office of sheriff on account of their conscientious objection to the sacramental test. We shall refer to this point again. Mr. Evans died in 1767, and the next year the Church itself was dissolved.

In 1683, the Sacred Field received into its bosom still more illustrious dust—that of Dr. John Owen, the second “Atlas and patriarch of Independency.” He was born in 1616, of Puritan parents. The year which produced Hampden’s resistance to ship-money saw Owen quit Oxford, through his inability to submit to the ecclesiastical tyranny of Laud, whose exactions at this period, and in this seat of learning, tended, probably more than all else beside, to give birth to the invincible dislike to civil and ecclesiastical domination which may be traced through the writings of Owen and others. “It is common,” says Mr. Orme, in his admirable biography, “to treat the conduct of such persons as Owen, who left the Church for refusing to submit to the interference of human authority, as unnecessarily punctilious, and as resulting from a narrow conformation of mind. But let it be remembered that it was not a particular rite or ceremony to which they refused submission, so much as the principle which they were required to recognise. The greatness of their minds appeared in their accurate investigations of religious truth, and in their willingly exposing themselves to severe suffering for its sake.”* Owen tested his sincerity by cheerfully losing a fortune for the sake of principles that would have been found in any Christian Church not corrupted by Popish innovations and anti-Christian doctrines. Owen came up to London, and took lodgings in Charter-house Yard. Whilst residing here, he published, in 1642, his “Display of Arminianism.” This brought him into favour with the Presbyterians, then in the height of their power, and he was promoted by the committee for purging the Church of scandalous ministers, to the living of Fordham, in Essex. But Owen’s temporary alliance with the Presbyterians was one of form rather than principle. He had searched too narrowly the causes and effects of truth, not to see the tendencies of Presbyterian domination—

“To force the consciences that Christ set free,”

and he seems to have become gradually convinced by Congregational principles. In this way the gradations of truth are always self-perfecting; “by step to step led on.” The fame of Owen increased. In April, 1646, he was called to preach before Parliament the monthly fast sermon. He did so, and from this text, “A vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedon, and prayed him

* Owen’s Life, by Orme, pp. 14, 15.

saying, 'Come over into Macedon, and help us.'—Acts xvi. 9. It contains passages of great strength and beauty. We can quote but one, and that in allusion to the times:—"If there had been no difficulties, there had been no deliverances. And did we never find our hearts so enlarged towards God upon such advantages as to say, 'Well, this day's temper of spirit was cheaply purchased by yesterday's anguish and fear!' . . . For it were an easy thing to recall your minds to some trembling points of time; when there was trembling in our armies, trembling in our councils, trembling to be ashamed, to be repented of; trembling in the city and in the country, and men were almost at their wits' end for the sorrows and fears of those days; and yet we see how the unchangeable purpose of God hath wrought strangely, through all these straits, from one end to another, that nothing might fall to the ground of what He had determined. . . . Yet had there been no tempests and storms we had not made out for shelter. Did you never run to a tree for shelter in a storm, and find fruit you expected not? Did you not go to God for safeguard in those times, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit, the peaceable fruit of righteousness, which made you say, 'Happy tempest which cast me in such a harbour!' It was a storm that occasioned the discovery of the golden mines of India; hath not a storm driven some to the discovery of the richer mines of the love of God in Christ?"* Who shall say after passages such as these that Puritanism had no poetry in its soul? The sermon was published and dedicated to the Parliament, in words worthy the pen of Milton. Our space forbids us to quote, but we must remark that this sermon proves that Owen was progressing towards the noblest views of Independency, for he thus alludes to Presbyterian narrowness: "Whichsoever way they look, they see nothing but errors; errors of all sizes, sorts, sects, and sexes from beginning to end." Referring to the same thing in an essay soon afterwards published, he adds, "Once more conformity is grown the touchstone amongst the greatest part of men, and dissent is the only crime!" His toleration likewise gradually advanced: "Heresy is a canker, but a spiritual one; let it be prevented by spiritual means; cutting off men's heads is no proper remedy for it. If State physicians think otherwise, I say no more, but that I am not of the college."

Owen lost Fordham, and with it ended his connexion with the Presbyterians. His views had advanced far beyond their prescribed limits, and were soon merged in those great principles of civil and religious freedom, by whose advocacy he advanced the interests of his country, and acquired a distinguished reputation. He now became minister of the parish of Coggleshall, in Essex, and formed at the same time a separate Church upon Congregational principles. Here Owen became acquainted with Fairfax, and was made his chaplain. Soon after this, on the 31st of January, 1649, the day

* Owen's Works, by Orme, vol. xv. pp. 20, 21.

after the death of Charles I. he was called upon to preach before the Parliament. This was a trying episode in the life of the great Congregationalist, and few would have acquitted themselves so admirably. The "commands of his superiors," as Mr. Orme well says, "must be obeyed;" but if the minority who hurried on the death of the king, thought to find in Owen an apologist for their act, they were mistaken, and must have been surprised at the studied and profound silence observed throughout it, concerning what must have been present to all minds." Unlike Milton, he did not defend what was irremediable, neither did he justify. There were allusions, but they were indirect; though he was unscrupulous in telling the listeners, as we think with admirable boldness, that much of the evil that had come upon the country, had originated with themselves, and within their own walls. The sermon was published with the title, "Righteous zeal encouraged by Divine Protection." Wisely did it show that it was not the king's death that alone would obliterate existing evils: "In vain do you seek to stop the streams while the fountains are open; turn yourselves whither you will, bring yourselves into what condition you can, nothing but peace and reconciliation with the God of all those judgments can give you rest in the day of visitation. . . ." There is no doubt some allusion to the late king and his acts, though ostensibly they refer to king Manasseh the Jew: "The sins were two—false worship and superstition. He built high places, made altars for Baal, and a grove, as did Ahab . . . He shed innocent blood very much till he filled Jerusalem with it from one end to the other. Whether this cruelty be to be ascribed to his tyranny in civil affairs, and so the blood shed is called innocent, because not of malefactors, or to his persecution in subordination to his false worship, instituted as before (as the Pope and his adherents have devoured whole nations *in ordine ad spiritualia*), is not apparent; but this is from hence and other places most evident, that superstition and persecution, will-worship and tyranny are inseparable concomitants. . . . You seldom see a fabric of human-invented worship, but either the foundation or top-stone is laid in the blood of God's people." In reference to the duty of the nation, he adds, "false worship, superstition, tyranny, and cruelty, if renewed under your hands, will certainly bring inevitable ruin on the whole nation." * The entire sermon was an admonition to the Parliament instead of an apology for the death of the king, and might a few years later, says Mr. Orme, have been assumed as treasonable against Cromwell.

Owen's views, like those of Dr. Goodwin, were imperfect as respected the limits of toleration as well as the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. To his honour be it said, that he was the first, when his party gained the ascendant, to advocate the rights of conscience; though, as Mr. Orme admits, from "moderation of his views it would appear as if he himself felt the difficulties which were

* Owen's Works, vol. xv. pp. 167, 168.

involved in his supposing that the civil magistrate, who had the truth on his side, was bound to provide places of worship and means of support for those who were engaged in promoting it, and to discourage all mere external inducements to enliven false worship. He seems not to have attended to the difference between what the magistrate is bound to do *as a Christian*, if he is one, and what he is called to do *as the head of the civil community*." Notwithstanding his mistake in this respect, he explicitly, and by a variety of arguments, maintains that the magistrate has no right to meddle with the religion of any person whose conduct is not injurious to society and destructive of its peace and order. For he nobly asks, "Is Gospel conviction no means? Hath the sword of discipline no edge? Is there no means of instruction in the New Testament established but a prison and a halter? Are the power of the Word and the Sword of the Spirit, which in days of old broke the stubbornest mountains and overcame the proudest nations, now quite useless? God forbid! Were the Churches of Christ established according to His appointment, and the professors of the truth so built up 'in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace' as they ought to be, I am persuaded these despised instruments would quickly make the proudest heretic to tremble."* On the same subject how finely Owen speaks in his "Retired Man's Meditations:" "*The province of the magistrate is this world and man's body: not his conscience or the concerns of eternity.*"

Owen's celebrated sermon, "The shaking and translating of Heaven and Earth," preached before the House of Commons, April 19th, 1641, introduced him to the acquaintance of Cromwell, whom he accompanied to Ireland as chaplain, and afterwards to Scotland. Upon his return from the latter in 1651, he was made, reluctantly to himself, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, for it must have been impossible for a man of his penetration not to perceive the inconsistency between his principles and the accepting of any religious office from the hands of the State. Yet his necessary residence at Oxford does not seem to have lessened Owen's duties in connexion with the Parliament, as he preached the Thanksgiving Sermon, October 24th, 1651, after the battle of Worcester; Ireton's funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey during the following year; and, in 1653, he was called upon to preach before Parliament in gratitude for the great naval victory over Van Tromp and De Wit.

His preferment to the Deanery of Christ Church was followed by that of Vice-Chancellor in the succeeding year. During the period that he held both these appointments there can be no doubt, but that his services were most valuable in promoting both the learning and order of the University, "for we were for two years," said Owen, in one of his orations, "but a mere rabble." Burnet admits that learning greatly flourished at this time at Oxford; and Clarendon likewise, that "it yielded a harvest of extraordinary good, and sacred knowledge." A point of great interest is,

* Works, by Orme. vol. xv. p. 289.

that Locke and Penn were both students of Christ Church during the presidentship of Owen. Without doubt, the principles of these two extraordinary men were in more or less degree influenced, during this initiatory period, by the rare breadth of Owen's views. There are various methods of arriving at a given truth, various lines to one desired conclusion; and it seems to us, that Locke, though a Churchman, so completely bases the arguments of his great Essay, and the Letter on Toleration, upon the principles advocated by Owen, as to make them in their *à priori* state, one and the same. Locke, however, advanced upon the great path of liberty of opinion, considerably beyond Owen. The latter limited himself, we fear, to *within* the pale of Christianity, and, in common with the rest of the Independents, looked upon the Quakers and Socinians as excluded, and thus open to persecution. Mr. Orme, with pardonable zeal, strives to clear Owen from the charge of having been present at the examination, as well as non-dissenting against the after punishment of some Quakers at Oxford. We fear that there is more truth in the matter, than a partial biographer would willingly admit. So difficult is it for even the best men to act wisely when they limit their appreciation to a given boundary of opinion, or attempt to sit as censors upon other men's views.

From the date Dr. Owen drew up the petition against Cromwell taking the title of King, he lost the Protector's favour, as well as his office of Vice-Chancellor. After the death of Cromwell, and the brief Protectorate of Richard, Dr. Owen attached himself to the party of Fleetwood and Desborough, preaching for the last time before Parliament in November, 1659. Upon the Restoration he was deprived of the Deanery of Christ Church, but he contrived to hold a Congregational assembly at Stradham, near Oxford, the place of his birth, till driven from it by persecution. He then desired to emigrate to New England, but was prevented by an order of the Court. He now removed to London, and employed his time in the pursuits of literature, and after the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, he lectured at Pinner's Hall. Yet it seems probable that he had kept, more or less, a congregation around him, even through those dark and evil days; as, soon after the Act of Uniformity came into operation, the Church in Bury Street, St. Mary's Axe—its meeting-house then newly built upon the site of the once celebrated priory of the Holy Trinity without Aldgate—invited him and his little congregation to join them. The request was acceded to, and the united congregation assembled together for the first time in 1673. It then consisted of one hundred and seventy-one members, amongst whom were Lieut-General Fleetwood, Sir John Hartopp, Colonel Desborough, and Mrs. Bradish, Cromwell's grand-daughter. We shall see something more of this congregation in our notice of Stoke Newington. It was remarkable for the number of its ejected ministers; and, in after years, Dr. Watts and the historian Neal were amongst its occasional preachers.

Dr. Owen suffered little in the general ruin which fell upon the Nonconforming. In addition to some private property, he acquired a large fortune by marriage, and he kept his carriage and country-house at Ealing, during the latter years of his life. Previous to this he had been an inhabitant of Kensington. He died at the former place, on the 24th of August, 1683, whence his body was conveyed to Bunhill Fields, attended by the carriages of sixty-seven noblemen and gentlemen, besides many coaches and persons on horseback. Thus passed away one of the powerful minds of that extraordinary age, when all the qualities which constitute mental strength and greatness were so thickly sown and so prolific. If, as we conceive it to have been the case, that through the instrumentality of Owen's university preceptorship, Penn's mind was in some degree prepared for the after reception of the great peace doctrines of the Quakers, and that of Locke's for its immortal duty of not simply discussing principles of toleration and mental liberty, but that of tracing their foundations to the primary laws of our being, and the natural constitution of the human mind, thus for ever securing them as principles of action, unassailable by the puny arguments of the bigot and the slave, the reverence due is large indeed. And thus, through the ever-ascending chain of causation, the theory of the poor despised Brownists led by degrees to the English Revolution, which, with all its shortcomings, annihilated for ever the Divine right pretence, and all its contingent detriment to the precious liberties and immortal hopes of man. If this be so, and who shall gainsay it? the head of the Puritans of Oxford needs no panegyric of words; it is sufficient that good men know that his dust rests in the Sacred Field, and that they hourly write his epitaph in the enjoyment of a precious and a recognised liberty!

In January, 1685, Newgate gave one of its victims to the dust of Bunhill. This was William Jenkyns, M.A., the ejected minister of Christ Church, London. At the passing of the Declaration of Indulgence he had a meeting-house erected for him in Jewin Street. Continuing to preach after the Indulgence was revoked, he was seized by soldiery, and, refusing to take the Oxford oath, he was committed to Newgate. He was infirm and old, being more than seventy-three, but the king refused his release. He lived little more than four months in the pestiferous atmosphere of Newgate; for he himself remarked, "a man might be as effectually murdered in Newgate as at Tyburn." Upon his death, a nobleman said to the king, "May it please your majesty, Jenkyns has got his liberty." "Aye! who gave it to him?" was the question and answer. The nobleman replied, "A greater than your majesty—the King of Kings." The king, it is said, was much struck.*

The first Nonconformist who suffered from the natural effects of the reaction of principles obnoxious at once to religious freedom and civil rights, was the illustrious

* Neal, vol. iv. p. 496. Non. Mem. vol. i. pp. 98, 100.

John Bunyan. So far as the great majority of the Presbyterians were concerned, the reaction was neither unmerited nor unsalutary in result, for nothing so much as suffering teaches bigotry the worth of toleration ; but unhappily in this reaction the ruin, misery, and often death of countless men, were included. To say that the Anglican Church had suffered, and that reaction was but just, is merely stating partial truth, for wrong can never be admitted as justifiable under the plea of right. But there can be no comparison between the reaction of Puritanism upon the Church, and that of the Church upon Puritanism ; even Mr. Hallam admits this.* One fifth of the product of each benefice had been set apart by the Long Parliament for the support of ejected ministers. If in many cases this remained unpaid, it was more owing to the troubles of the times than to injustice, and meetings for Episcopalian worship were connived at, to a degree, under the Commonwealth, and much more so under Cromwell. As an instance, the Sabbath meetings of no less than three hundred Episcopalians were permitted in Oxford during the vice-chancellorship of Dr. Owen. This was somewhat different to the treatment of Puritanism under Laud and his bishops, and by the reinstated hierarchy of the Restoration. As soon as this latter event took place, persecution commenced, even before the hopeful Presbyterians were undeceived, or the convention Parliament, which had restored the king, was replaced by that which re-enacted all the worst penal laws of the days of Laud. The Restoration was in May, and as early as July the Lincolnshire Baptists petitioned his majesty for protection against abuse ; but their petition was unheeded, and in November, John Bunyan was apprehended at Samsell, in Bedfordshire, while preaching, and committed to Bedford Gaol, where he found already incarcerated two ministers, and sixty Dissenting brethren. Even under the Commonwealth, an attempt had been made by the municipal authorities, who were probably Presbyterians, to indict Bunyan for preaching, "an office," according to Mr. Southey, "incompatible with his calling," but it was crushed through the interference of Cromwell. The Restoration over, his persecution, as we have seen, began in earnest. After several examinations before the justices of the town, he was committed to Bedford Gaol, where he remained some six weeks, till the quarter sessions, when he was indicted as a person who "devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and who was a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and destruction of the good subjects of this kingdom." When questioned by one of the presiding justices why he did not use the Common Prayer-Book, his answer was that of one who knew himself to be a true priest, endowed with that hallowed fire, that light Divine, that inheritance of celestial spirit, which in all time, past, present, and to come, has consecrated the possessors,

* Constitutional Hist. vol. ii. page 316, note.

and will ever consecrate them to the Divine services and needs of the world, to teach, to edify, to exalt, and foreknow—"priests by the imposition of a mighty hand." "Every man can preach," he said, "that hath received the gift from God." "The prayers in the Common Prayer-Book were such as were made by other men, and not by the motions of the Holy Ghost within our hearts." "For men may have many elegant and excellent words, and yet not pray at all; but when a man prayeth he doth through the sense of those things which he wants, which sense is begotten by the Spirit, from out his heart before God through Christ, though his words be not so many and so excellent as others." Thus thinking, thus believing, thus conscious that he was an accredited minister of the Most High, and that of such are expected courage, endurance, faith, he answered when told that if he did not leave off preaching he must be banished, and if that did not suffice he would be hung, "If I was out of the prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God." Verily, by this answer, the world might know that John Bunyan was a true priest and true hero!

For three months he lay in prison. The justices then sent the clerk of the peace, to see if he would submit, but he was immovable. Further proceedings, it would seem, were stayed, by the proclamation which allowed imprisoned persons to sue for pardon during one twelvemonth, ensuing from the date of the Coronation; whereupon, his wife, who had already travelled to London, and presented a petition, through Lord Barkwood, to the House of Lords, petitioned the judges during assize-term at Bedford. Sir Matthew Hale was one of these; and there can be no doubt, from the evidence preserved, that her entreaties for her husband's release would have met with a favourable result, but that the Lord Chief Justice was to a degree brow-beaten by his brother judges, and assured by them, that Bunyan was a "pestilent fellow," that he was a "tinker," and his doctrine was the "doctrine of the devil." Thus unaided, Bunyan's long imprisonment began. At first, this was little more than nominal; for the jailer, who befriended him, suffered him to go forth at will, to preach, to visit the members of his Church and family, but at length venturing so far as London, to visit a congregation of Baptists, it was discovered, and he was henceforth shut up. Mr. Southey thinks this was with advantage, as it removed him from "a course of dangerous activity," inasmuch as "holding conventicles," when his doctrines did not differ "a hair's breadth" from those of the Church, was a double crime. The opposite is the truth, and proves the political motives which moved the religious atrocities of this reign, "for there is no other instance in history," says Mr. Hallam, "where men have suffered persecution on account of differences, which were admitted by those who inflicted it to be of such small moment."*

* Con. Hist. vol. ii. 351.

But there was no shutting up the spirit, which He had eradicated and consecrated to the cause of truth. Rather was its freedom increased by imprisonment ; and as its possessor sat from day to day, making tagged-laces for the support of his family, it sought far and wide, it touched heaven, it descended beneath the earth, it conversed with angels, it beheld the “delectable mountains,” familiar and daily things enriched its effects, till in the end came forth an Allegory, that has had no likeness in any age or tongue. Bunyan’s prison was situated on the old bridge at Bedford, rather nearer one end than another. It is now removed, but drawings preserve its likeness to



BEDFORD PRISON.

us. Bridge and prison are alike picturesque ; the stone-work of both is weather-beaten, grey, and lichen-covered ; the broad, clear, pebbled river glides beneath, and where it winds away in the far distance, stretch pastoral lawny meadows of great beauty. In that age we may be sure, and in due season, the clear waters were crowned by those “lilies,” spoken of by Christian. The influence of both river and landscape may, we think, be often traced in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Yet the prison was a close and noisome place ; a perfect pest-house when visited by Howard in the next century. Here, however, Bunyan preached and laboured, and guided his fellow-

prisoners, through twelve years that have no parallel in the history of our country. The Pilgrim's Progress is said to have been written during the last year of his imprisonment.

The merit of his release is said to lie between Whitehead the Quaker, and Dr. Owen, who was first to stir in his behalf. This was at the close of 1672. The Declaration of Indulgence was but short-lived; persecution in a still more hateful form cursed the land; but Bunyan, undismayed, followed up his itinerant preaching in Bedfordshire, and the surrounding counties. He was often listened to in the secret depths of woodlands, in solitary homesteads, in barns and malt-houses. As soon as practicable his congregation in Bedford built him a meeting-house, and he commenced



ZOAR CHAPEL.

the practice of a yearly visit to London, or oftener, for the purpose of preaching. His favourite place of ministry seems to have been in Southwark, near the "Falcon," once a celebrated resort of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. If but one day's notice were given, the place could not contain half the people who assembled. Three thousand have often been gathered together; and even in cold dark winter mornings, as many as twelve hundred would be assembled by seven o'clock. Such is the power of genius. The chapel in Zoar Street, Gravel Lane, Southwark, so usually connected with Bunyan's name, is, in reality, less so than believed. It is stated in *Londini Illustrata*, that the ground on which the chapel was built was not leased out for that purpose till 1687. Bunyan could not, therefore, have preached in it, except on the occasion

of his last visit to London. During this he rode to Reading on horseback to perform an act of friendship. Succeeding therein, he returned to London amidst heavy rains. Drenched and fatigued, he repaired to the house of his friend, Mr. Strudwick, a grocer, living at the sign of the Star, on Snow Hill, where he fell ill immediately, and after lingering ten days, died from the effects of cold and fever, on the 31st of August, 1688, in the sixtieth year of his age. He was interred in his friend's vault in Bunhill Fields, and for some years afterwards, it was a favourite wish with dying Nonconformists to be buried near his grave.

Unlike Milton, who lived not long enough to see the dawn of newer hopes for "expiring liberty," Bunyan witnessed the Revolution, and closed his services amidst its comparative peacefulness. Large as his popularity seems to have been, it did not lessen his natural modesty and simplicity ; and like as with Cromwell, it was to be



MARSHALSEA PRISON.

observed in him, that he could fit himself to a better social position than he originally filled. The many pilgrim feet which have visited his grave ; the many pens that have recorded its place in the "Sacred Field," may not be reckoned ; but it will be surely hallowed, most surely remembered, whilst young and old, the rich and poor, the learned and unlearned, each with a reverence, a wonder, an interpretation of his own, climb in fancy the "Delectable Mountains," hear the low converse of the "shining ones," and behold the radiance of the "Celestial City" from afar.

In 1690, George Fox—not to be thus dismissed—was gathered to his fathers in the "Sacred Field." As also in the succeeding year, Thomas Brand, whom Calamy calls "the highest mirror of charity and piety." In 1692, Lieut.-General Fleetwood was brought here in great state from Stoke Newington, for burial. Likewise, four years afterwards, Henry Vincent, who had preached from the ruins of the Fire of London to countless

thousands. His popularity was as wonderful as his courage. He was pastor of a meeting-house in St. George's, Southwark, whither soldiers were sent sabbath by sabbath during those years the profligacy and persecution of the reign of Charles II. were at their height, to interrupt his preaching, or, as was occasionally the case, to drag him by the hair from his pulpit. On one occasion they planted four muskets, one in each corner, yet he proceeded undismayed. On another he was rescued by his congregation, but retaken again by the soldiery. He was shut up in a cellar all night, and fined 20*l*. In 1670, he was carried off to the Marshalsea, from thence secretly to the Gatehouse, because of the offence given that numbers visited him in prison. When released he still preached, still was persecuted, still was popular. In 1682, a justice of the peace came into the meeting-house whilst he was in the pulpit, and commanded him in the King's name to come down. His answer is as fine as anything history records, "*I proceed, for I am commanded by a higher—the King of kings.*"* What could penal laws do with such men? Nor was courage their only virtue. For a predecessor of Vincent's in the solemn dust of Bunhill, replied when asked why he preached amidst the solitary woodlands of Wiltshire, and yet reaped so little for his pains, replied, "I am content to serve. He that sets me to work will pay me my wages."† His name was Henry Dent, a scholar of Warden College, Oxford.

Other names crowd round us, whose

"—— suffering for truth's sake,
Was fortitude to highest victory,
And to the faithful, death the gate of life;"

but that our space necessitates an otherwise unmerited silence.

One must, however, be mentioned, Dr. Daniel Williams, buried here in 1716, whose services to literature and to religious liberty were of no common kind. He founded the Red Cross Street Library, London, at a day when nothing like literature for the people existed, or libraries easy of access for research or study. Driven from Denbighshire, his native county, by persecution, he settled in Dublin, and preached there twenty years. At that date, 1687, he was necessitated to return to England, through the tyrannous proceedings of a popish administration. Settling in London, he was useful in making clear to many Dissenters that their approval of the dispensing power brought forward by the King, James II. would be erroneous; that as the severities of a former reign were undoubtedly directed more against Dissenters for standing in the way of arbitrary power, than for their nonconformity, it was better to suffer renewed hardships, than declare for measures destructive of the liberties of their country. This admirable view was taken. He preached in various parts of the

* Calamy and Palmer's Memorials, vol. i. p. 240.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 511.

metropolis ; in Silver Street, Cheapside, particularly. He was much consulted by King William, and was a cherished friend of Baxter's. He was so zealous and earnest for the civil and religious liberties of the nation, that no measures opposed to them escaped his notice. But he lived long enough to see his fears set at rest by the accession of George I. Upon that event he headed the great body of Dissenting ministers who repaired to Court to congratulate the King.

Dunton, the quaint old London bookseller, Whitehead, De Foe, the mother of the Wesleys, Dr. Watts, Blake the painter—a man of rare genius and originality—Thomas Hardy, and Thomas Stothard, are amongst the rest whose dust makes Bunhill a "Sacred Field." It is closed now as a burial-ground, and thus the dead repose in sanctity and peace.

But we may be sure that mighty London will ever have her "Sacred Fields." Not places set down as in old times at the thresholds of men's doors, so that literally the dead brought death to the living ; or as in present cases, suburban cemeteries so entangled with the outskirts of the mighty town, and formed on clayey and retentive soils, as to necessarily involve sanitary evils of the worst kind, and this more and more as dwellings close round them ; but magnificent far-away burial places, like that at Woking, in Surrey—which is literally London's *Campo Santo*—for generations to come. Here, where hundreds of acres lie clothed with their ancient heathery sod, where the bee hums, the fresh wind blows from sea, and moor, and hill, where the peace of eternal nature broods and rests, where disinfecting vegetation varies the landscape and adorns it with plantation and avenue, and countless beds of fragrant flowers,—where even the very soil is fitting for the last narrow house—there will the poor and rich, the gifted and ungifted, the Conformist and Nonconformist, all creeds and political beliefs, mingle and rest at last in that physical harmony which lies deep amidst the mysteries of nature. And this great resting-place will, we may be sure, hold dust as sacred as Bunhill Fields or Westminster Abbey ; the dust of those who have fought the great fight well. For truths as mighty as any foregone, await peaceful advocacy, await faith, await hope. Let us as children of a mighty, many-nation race, plead for and advance, as did our fathers in the old time, the cause of sovereign Truth, whether it be under a civil, political, social, or religious form. We then shall make a "Sacred Field" wherever we may lie. If oblivion cover us, no matter—the effects we caused survive—and have an eternity of their own.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BULL AND MOUTH MEETING HOUSE AND WHITE HART COURT, GRACECHURCH STREET.—
THE INWARD AND SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

QUAKERISM, its rise, and history, if not quite so new in some of its principles as many think, is at least one of the most significant facts of the great advance of the human mind in the seventeenth century. Its rise, its wonderful spread, its ceaseless activity, prove, in a degree, that it was based on principles inherent in the nature of man; but, that these principles, speculative only heretofore, should come at once into action, is amongst the most astonishing things of that age. Whilst men were disputing about ecclesiastical formula, this did away with form altogether; whilst they persecuted each other for hair-breadth differences in creed, this left each man free to choose and to accept; whilst they disputed the relations of Church and State, Quakerism ignored the union altogether; and denouncing place and profit, churches and ordinances, titles and vestments, it looked by the light of its own faculties at the sublime truths of Christianity, and for the first time almost since the Divine Sermon had been preached upon the Mount, charity, equality, love, peace, hitherto taken as doctrinal alone, were vitalized through action. With this, was undoubtedly included, much reprehensible enthusiasm, much extravagance—these the results of an age when every principle was in ferment—but there was vitality, infinite beauty, infinite truth, and that many of the doctrines of Quakerism form part of an essential and irrepressible human advance can no more be doubted than that we are heirs of immortality. Of the formalist part of Quakerism we say nothing—coats and bonnets, thees and thous, matters sectarian and distinct, have nothing to do with Divine truth; but that truth itself, as expressed in charity, love, brotherhood, equality, are elements and necessities of human progress. Humanity will have an infinite abstract Quakerism around and about it by-and-by.

George Fox commenced preaching his novel doctrines in 1647. The idea of an inward light and spiritual conscience was by no means new; men in all ages have been prone to speculate upon the hidden mystery of spirit; but there can be no manner of doubt that the youth whose mother had descended from “the stock of the martyrs,” thought out the idea for himself, in total ignorance of Buddhist, Platonist, and early Christian. Fox was essentially, what Penn called him, “a new man,” and so much was this inward light, namely, “the light of Christ within us, God’s gift for man’s

salvation," * considered their distinguishing point or principle, that till 1650 he and his followers were called, "Professors of the Light," or "Children of the Light." His first journey from his home at Drayton in Leicestershire, was to London ; but he shortly returned, for he regarded the great City as a place of "heathen darkness." After much spiritual woe and silent agony, his new opinions gained strength and cohesion in his mind ; he became comforted ; day by day, it grew more a faith to him that he was called upon to preach his new interpretation of the Gospel, and speaking in the pure vernacular of the Bible, he not only found himself possessed of marvellous fluency, but with a gift to attract and inspire hearers, as all power based on truth has. From this day the faculty was his, to preach a Gospel for the poor, and not a worldly formula, a selfish pretence, an unjust thing, a falsity of any sort or kind, but what he attacked, he denounced with a courage that was surprising. What he said he believed in, and was prepared to suffer for its sake. For two or three years he had listeners only ; his words, says Sewel, "being few, but prompt and piercing to those whose hearts were in some measure prepared to be capable of receiving his doctrines." † Many of these listeners became his fellow-labourers. Though "it set the professors of those times in a rage, that some of their adherents hearkened to his preaching, for they could not endure to hear perfection spoken of, and of a holy and sinless life, as a state that could be obtained here." He now travelled about from place to place, chiefly in the midland counties, entering churches, interrupting the service, bidding the preacher come down from his pulpit, as he "taught not Gospel," and when brought before the authorities of the place, refusing to answer. All this was something quite new, and was soon sure to arouse persecution. At Leicester, Fox being present in a church during a religious disputation, heard the clergyman stay a woman who desired to ask a question. "This," says Sewel with that quaintness which is one of the charms of his beautiful history, "kindled G. Fox's zeal, so that he stepped up and asked the priest, 'Dost thou call this place (the steeple-house) a church ? or dost thou call this mixed multitude a Church ?' And George Fox told him 'the Church was the pillar and the ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household which Christ was the head of. But he was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of stones, lime, and wood.'" Not only thus in churches did he declare his new interpretation of spiritual things—a point not to be defended when it interrupted the celebration of others' religious rites, for toleration presumes that we give as well as demand liberty, but in law courts, where unquestionably in those days, an heroic voice was needed. He also in markets and public places advocated temperance, denounced licentiousness, and showed to the teachers of the young that they must be "patterns and examples

of virtue." All this was surely practically consistent with his idea—now fully attained, "that every man was enlightened by the Divine Light of Christ"—

"access of mind
And visitation from the living God."

It was at this time that he had thoughts of practising physic for the "good of mankind." It was much better, however, that he became instead the physician of souls, and the apostle of peace and love. It was this sort of medicine the moral diseases of the world needed. His first imprisonment took place at Nottingham. His followers had by this time greatly increased. Curious as it may appear, the first that followed Fox in preaching Quakerism, was a young woman, named Elizabeth Horton; and these preachers so increased, that, in the seventh year of Quakerism there were no less than sixty; and these travelling the kingdom in all directions, excited an extraordinary commotion. As for Fox himself, wherever "he made his progress through the country," says William Howitt, "his voice was like a trumpet, to collect around him hosts of inquirers. Priests, notwithstanding the opposition of their order, left their pulpits; officers in the army, judges, gentlemen, mechanics, husbandmen, all classes, indeed, flocked round him, and found in his system of a free Gospel and renouncement of the vanities of the times, that which they had hitherto sought for in vain." Whilst Fox was imprisoned in Derby—and a prison was now almost always his lodging wherever he went—we obtain our first glimpse of Quakerism in contact with the Independents. The incident was memorable. Fox was brought before Gervas Bennet, one of the justices of the town, for the purpose of having his mittimus of committal to prison signed; whereupon the justice, having heard that Fox and his followers "trembled at the word of the Lord," took up the word and called him and his friends scornfully, "Quakers." It took, became popular, and has outlived contumely. It was at this time that Fox was considered mad! for preaching "*purity, righteousness, and perfection*,"* but it mattered not, in prison, or out of prison, the work of reformation went on; prison walls did not lessen the number of his disciples. When out of prison, he was often invited by preachers to occupy their pulpits, but his answer must have astonished many, "that he came not to uphold their idol temples, nor their priests, nor their tithes, nor their Jewish and heathenish ceremonies. That the ground on which their temples stood was no more holy than any other piece of ground. . . . Moreover, that people ought to leave all superstitious ceremonies, traditions, and doctrines of men, and not regard such teachers of the world that took tithes and grant wages, *preaching for hire, and divining for money*." Such exhortations were necessarily obnoxious to all the religionists of the day, and were certain to beget persecution. Yet heroic, through the force of truth, wherever

George Fox was threatened, there George Fox went. Simplicity such as this is one of the essentials of strength and faith.

In 1654, whilst Fox was travelling through the north of England, often housed in prison, and sometimes cherished on the hearth of Judge Fell, the Quakers appeared prominently in London. From the first, their doctrines must have gained ground in a place where multitudes were congregated, and discussion available to their dissemination; but in that year Howgill and Pearson, two of Fox's disciples, opened the first separate meeting in the house of one Thomas Dring, in Watling Street, behind St. Paul's, then a busy place of wealthy shopkeepers, of whom Dring was probably one. But the meeting could not have been kept long in this locality, as its great increase in numbers necessitated a removal to a more commodious place in Aldersgate Street, where the same year a house was taken or built, and named, from its vicinity to the celebrated old inn, the Bull and Mouth, now, as Mr. Cunningham justly says, "foolishly called the Queen's Hotel." * This inn was quite as old as the reign of Henry VIII., as its name, a corruption of Boulogne Mouth—viz. the mouth of the harbour of Boulogne—was given in compliment to Henry VIII. who took that place in 1544. The "Bullogne Gate," in Holborn, was another instance. The meeting-house is marked in a map in the first and best edition of Strype's "Stow," 1720, as standing in a large court on the east side of the street, a little beyond the site of the present Post Office. In the meanwhile, whilst a congregation was thus gathering, Howgill, a very able man, and who had been an officer in the army, sought Cromwell, then raised to the Protectorate, to complain of the treatment generally inflicted upon Fox and his followers. There was great justice in these complaints; for though, as yet, there were no express penal laws against them, the Quakers were imprisoned for refusing to pay respect to magistrates, and for interrupting public worship, for refusing to take an oath, for not paying tithes, and for meeting in the streets and other public places. For their zeal in exhorting magistrates, many had been whipped. The result of this interview was probably not very favourable; as Howgill addressed a letter to the Protector, after he and others had lingered about Whitehall and the park apparently for some days. The letter is signed as written in St. James's Park. It vehemently denounces the Protector and his policy; that as he had been made high, so should he be brought low. "Thou shalt be as dust before the wind, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and He will perform His promise. For this is what I look for at thy hands, saith the Lord, that thou shouldst undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free. Are not many shut up in prison, some stocked, some stoned, some shamefully treated? And some are judged

* Hand-Book, p. 88.

blasphemous . . . by those laws made by man . . . some have been shut up in prison because they could not swear ; and some for declaring against sin openly in markets, have suffered as evil-doers. And now, if thou let them suffer in this nation



FLOGGING A NONCONFORMIST IN CHEAPSIDE.

by these laws, and count it just, I will visit thee for those things. . . . I will break the yoke from off their necks. . . ." The result of this letter is not known, though some of Cromwell's domestic servants were converted. We have quoted this to show what were the sufferings of the Friends at this period, when so-called "toleration" was

said to be the guide of rulers. What might not be expected when "intolerance" was professed and carried out? The Quakers were certainly most reprehensible in disturbing the sacred worship of those differing in religious opinion with themselves, and for insulting the magistracy of the land; but, on the other hand, that those so lately persecuted themselves, so lately the victims of atrocious penal laws, should punish men for non-payment of the very tithes they had decried, imprisoning them for praying, stoning them for the bold and honest declaration of moral and religious truth, is an anomaly which teaches the lesson, that civil and religious functions are wholly, utterly, decidedly incompatible with each other, and that wherever opinion is limited, and those limits are enforced by laws, however mild such may be, injustice in some form or other will be the result. The truth was, the religious mind of the nation had intrenched itself within the limits of Christianity, and Quakerism was pronounced to be without those limits, though one would think its Divine alliance would have been observable to the dullest bigot. Again, the church-livings were chiefly held by Presbyterians, and many magistrates were of the same creed, so that principles which evoked the sublimest, widest religious liberty, that denounced hire, pomp, and formula in connexion with faith, were certain to meet with martyrdom on every side. It is no use limiting persecution to quality and quantity, a little more or a little less, a little lighter or a little harder, for the pernicious principle is sure to go beyond measure. The Independents, in this matter, were the most reprehensible; the resolutions passed during the Protectorate of Richard, speak for themselves. There can be no doubt, however, that Cromwell would have done much more for the Friends if he had had the power, but bigotry surrounded him on every side, and he was led to entertain a degree of disfavour by the report that they conspired against his Government.

For some suspicion of this kind Fox had been imprisoned at Watchmore, in Lancashire. He was then brought up to London, and lodged at the Mermaid, at Charing Cross, whilst the captain that had been his guard went to give Cromwell an account of him. Upon his return, he told George Fox that the Protector required that he, Fox, should promise not to take up a carnal sword or weapon against him or the Government as it then was; that this should be written, and Fox's name set to it. This was an easy requirement of the first great Apostle of Peace, who, as he stated, had been "sent as a witness against all violence and works of darkness." When this paper had been delivered, Fox was sent for to Whitehall to see the Protector, whom he found "not yet dressed, it being pretty early in the morning." Fox, entering, said, "Peace be in this house." Whereupon a long discourse followed, Cromwell many times saying, "it was very good, and it was truth." Fox then withdrawing, Cromwell caught him by the hand, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour of a day together we should be dearer one to another;" adding, "he wished him no more ill than he did to his

own soul." It was then signified to Fox by the captain that attended him, that he was at liberty. He was then led into a hall, and told that he was to dine there by the Lord Protector's orders. "But George," says Sewel, "bid them tell the Protector he would not eat a bit of his bread, nor drink a sup of his drink." When this was related to Cromwell, he said, "Now I see there is a people risen and come up, that I cannot win either with gifts, words, offices, or places, but *all other sects* and people I can." To this some one replied, "That the Quakers forsook their own, and were not likely to look for such things from him."* Fox now began to preach in London, probably at the new meeting-house in Aldersgate Street, many of the Lord Protector's Court attending there, and crowds so immense gathering round it, as to leave neither space for egress nor ingress.

We have just had a proof of Cromwell's tolerative spirit, and how little owing to him was the persecution then carried forward in the provinces by petty justices and intolerant bigots. Armed with several Acts and ordinances of the Long Parliament, almost every justice of the peace took upon himself to determine questions respecting tithes, and to resolve what constituted blasphemy and heresy. The most innocent actions and words were thus liable to be distorted by every informer. A few words addressed to an assembly after a Presbyterian had closed his sermon, were called a disturbance; an exhortation against sin in streets and markets, a breach of the peace; and the old vagrant-laws of Elizabeth's reign were so shockingly perverted, that the Friends—persons of condition and substance—were frequently apprehended and disgracefully whipped, for the simple fact of travelling from one place, or from one house to another on the Sabbath. Many were confined, and died in dungeons, the description of which would sully these pages. Fox, upon quitting London, travelled to Lancaster, and was again imprisoned. When Cromwell's Parliament met in September, 1655, London was again discredited by scenes of petty persecution. A young woman was imprisoned, and beaten with a rope's end, for addressing a preacher at Stepney; others were imprisoned for simply preaching. To crown these disgraceful acts, James Naylor was brought up from Bristol to be examined by a Committee of the House, for blasphemy. This atrocious business savoured more of the Spanish Inquisition, or the worst proceedings of Laud, than of the times of men who had been, many of them, sufferers from intolerance. But the Presbyterians were predominant in the House; and the part taken by their preachers, Caryl, Manton, Griffith, Reynolds, and, we are sorry to add, the name of Philip Nye, the Independent, was vastly to their discredit. There are at all times persons whom enthusiasm unhinges, who have not sobriety of character sufficient to accept and serve the cause of truth with that quiet and steady zeal which is always so efficient, but must incorporate into their

* Sewel, p. 97.

service vanities and weaknesses of their own. Thus did Naylor; he was weak in mind, probably diseased in body, and his foolish hallucinations were the product of both; but he was neither base nor insane, and the Friends themselves did not more discountenance and hold aloof from his vagaries than he himself regretted them when sobriety returned. A man who gave utterance to such dying expressions as he did, so exquisite in God-like feeling, patience, charity, love, could have been no object—at any moment of his life—for the fanatic retaliation of tongue-boring, whipping, branding, and imprisonment; nor for jesuitical visitations in prison, where he was wise enough to tell Caryl and the others, “that they were treading in the steps of the bishops, by thus seeking to ensnare the innocent.” Such a man as this needed for his disorder real, not theological doctors. But such is one of the pernicious results of investing professors of religion with the least degree of civil authority.

To make matters worse, fresh ordinances were passed in Parliament, in relation to the observance of the Sabbath, and they affected the Quakers, inasmuch as it was enacted “that all persons should resort to some church or chapel, where the *true worship* of God was performed, or to some meeting-place of Christians, *not differing in matters of faith from the public profession of the nation*,” and Quakerism being excluded from these orthodox limits, its believers suffered anew. Upon his release from imprisonment, Fox came up to London, and seeing Cromwell, “spoke to him about the sufferings of his friends in the nation, and showed him how contrary this persecution was to Christ, His apostles, and to Christianity.”* But Cromwell could do little with the bigoted Parliaments that answered his summons; for not content with the severity exercised by the legislature, the Presbyterian preachers excommunicated the Quakers, and charged their congregations not to buy or sell, eat or drink with them. George Fox might well say, the spirit of their persecution was derived from the Pope. In 1658, many Friends were thrust into the Fleet, some into the Gatehouse. The ordinary prisons were filled; for the odious custom was now begun, of sending armed soldiers to break up religious meetings; one method being, by dragging the whole congregation, member by member, forth by the hair of their head.†

The death of Cromwell brought no relief. The extent of the bitter spirit existing against the Friends, may be gathered from the resolutions passed by the delegates and ministers of the Congregational churches in London, who assembled upon the abdication of Richard Cromwell. These Congregationalists declared, amongst other things—and we must recollect that this class of men professed to be the most enlightened religionists of the day—“that though we greatly prize our Christian liberties, yet we profess our utter dislike and abhorrence of a universal toleration, as being contrary to the mind of God in his word. . . . *It is our desire that countenance be not given, or trust*

*Sewel, p. 157.

† Besse, vol. i. p. 366.

reposed in the hands of Quakers; they being persons of such principles as are destructive to the Gospel, and inconsistent with the peace of civil societies." "These resolutions," says Mr. Fletcher, "are utterly inconsistent with the hypothesis, of which modern Independents are too apt to boast, that the leading Congregationalists of the Commonwealth period were advocates of a perfect liberty. The last of them, in particular," the one relating to the Quakers, "attaches a stigma to their name which nothing can remove."*

As a calm precedes the sweeping hurricane, so upon the Restoration a lull came in the tempest of persecution. Hubberthorn, one of Fox's friends, had an interview with the king; and through the intercession of Margaret Fell, one amongst the noblest of Puritan women, about four hundred Quakers were released from prison. But the lull was short-lived. Taking advantage of Venner's insurrection, the new government, in its desire to crush all classes of sectaries, issued a proclamation forbidding Anabaptists, Quakers, and Fifth-monarchy men, to assemble for the purpose of worshipping God. It also commanded all magistrates and peace-officers to search out all conventicles, and cause the persons they found therein to be bound over at the next sessions. Innocent of all participation in this silly plot, the Quakers addressed the king, beseeching a favourable hearing, and disclaiming all desire of meddling in civil affairs. They at the same time informed him, that about four hundred of their body were imprisoned in and around the City of London, and that about a thousand more lay in the country gaols. A promise was given that they should remain undisturbed, if they would live peaceably, but it was not kept. Like all the promises of that discreditable reign, it was "writ in water."

Persecution had not to wait for those new and more stringent enactments included in the Corporation Act, as there was through their mere revival that line of bloody penal laws, which extended from the reign of Henry VIII. to the third of James I., to fall back upon. There was the law against the subtraction of tithes, against neglecting to resort to the parish church on Sundays, for administrating the oath of supremacy, and that enjoining the oath of allegiance. They were so surrounded by snares, that there existed not a chance of escape. It was considered no sin to rob a Quaker; and when informers sprung up on every side, the spoliation of the Friends' property was gloried in. The prisons were soon filled. An Act was passed for transporting Quakers. After the Act of Uniformity came into operation in 1662, the prisons throughout the country contained more than an aggregate of four thousand two hundred Friends. In London, the condition of the prisons was incredible. It was said by several in the House of Commons, who, to their honour, spoke in behalf of the Quakers, that these places were so loathsome "they would not put their hunting dogs

* Hist. of Independency, vol. iv. p. 182.

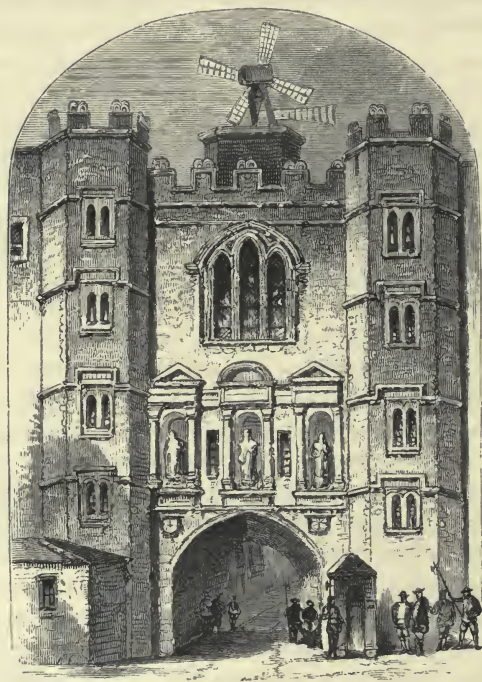
there." As many as three hundred and forty-six Quakers were at one time in Newgate, and one hundred of them in a small room. Almost all were sick, a large number died. The simple fact of entering the Guildhall covered, or of passing the Lord Mayor in the same condition, instantly led to insult and committal. The scenes enacted within and without the Bull and Mouth Meeting-House each Sabbath, and this with no intermission for months together, would be incredible, but for our general knowledge of that black and unhallowed time, that "golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave." The pavement within and around this meeting-house, was as much a place of martyrdom as Smithfield.

"In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,"

came captain and soldier, bailiff and informer, as men go to war, or husbandmen to harvest. Silent or preaching they were seized, beaten with cudgels till many fell senseless, and the pavement was drenched with blood. The majority would then be dragged into St. Paul's Churchyard, there handcuffed, and taken thence like slaughtered sheep to Newgate. This on Sunday, and in the name of religion! Ellwood, himself, was one of these victims; and this at the time he was amanuensis to Milton. On the morning of the 26th of August, 1662, he was seized at the Bull and Mouth, in Aldersgate Street, by a party of soldiers of the train-bands of London. He was committed to Bridewell, and upon his trial, refusing to take the oath of allegiance, he was committed to Newgate and thrust into the notorious common side. This was the worst part of the prison, and so crowded with pick-pockets, felons, and ruffians, as to be styled by Ellwood "a type of hell upon earth." Perhaps the reader may be aware that Newgate, the last built of the gates of the City of London, stood across Newgate Street, a little east of Giltspur Street and the Old Bailey.* It was erected in the reign of Henry I. or Stephen, in consequence of the rebuilding and enlargement of Old St. Paul's, by which the highway from Aldgate through Cheap to Ludgate was so crossed and stopped up, that passengers were forced to go round by Paternoster Row or the Old Exchange to get to Ludgate. This prison was several times repaired, but being nothing more than a building over the gateway, was wholly unfitted for the incarceration of such throngs as were thrust into it from the date of the accession of Charles II. The first storey over the gate was, according to Ellwood, called the Hall, and this was common to all the prisoners on that side "to walk in and beg out of." In some rooms over this hall they were allowed to work during the day; but at night *all* the prisoners were "lodged in one room, which was large and round, having in the middle of it a great pillar of oaken

* Cunningham, p. 354.

timber, which bore up the chapel that is over it. To this pillar we fastened our hammocks at one end, and to the opposite wall on the other end, quite round the room, and in three degrees or three storeys high, one over the other, so that they who lay in the upper and middle row of hammocks were obliged to go to bed first, because they were to climb up to the higher by getting into the lower. And under the lower rank of hammocks, by the wall-sides, were laid beds upon the floor, in



OLD NEWGATE.

which the sick and such weak persons as could not get into the hammocks lay. And, indeed, though the room was large and pretty airy, yet the breath and steam that came from so many bodies, of different ages, conditions, and constitutions, pack't up so close together, was enough to cause sickness amongst us, and I believe did so. For there were many sick, and some very weak, though we were not long there, yet in that time, one of our fellow-prisoners who lay in one of those pallet beds died." An

inquest was of necessity held, and one old gentleman, the foreman of the jury—it being customary to seize persons beneath the gateway for that purpose—insisting upon seeing the room in which the deceased died, was very reluctantly shown thither with the rest of the jury by the turnkeys, just as the prisoners were going to bed. When he beheld the scene he lifted up his hands and exclaimed, “Lord bless me, what a sight is here! *I did not think there could be so much cruelty in the hearts of Englishmen to use Englishmen in this manner!* We need not now question (said he to the rest of the jury) how this man came by his death; we may rather wonder that they are not all dead, for this place is enough to breed an infection among them. But,” added he, “if it please God to lengthen my life till to-morrow, I will find means to let the king know how his subjects are dealt with.” * Nothing came of it, however; the deaths continued, one of the victims being Edward Burroughs.

One of the two trials famous in Quaker annals, occurred in the June of the year 1662. It was that of John Crook, a member of the bar and a justice of the peace, who had become a convert to Quakerism. A few points of it will give some faint idea of what persons suffered at that period from the insolence of such judges as Charles had raised to the bench, and of that debased and slavish loyalty rife amidst the classes from which the jury were drawn. By the time Penn and Mead’s trial came on in 1670, the nation had become a little wiser.

Upon being arraigned, Crook’s natural question, as a man skilled in law, was as to the name of his accuser, to which the judge replied, “Your tongue is your own, and you must not have liberty to speak.”

CROOK. “I speak in the presence and fear of the everlasting God, that my tongue is not my own: it is the Lord’s.”

JUDGE. “Cease your canting.”

Standing firm against this insolent intimidation, Crook was taken away from the bar; and after some lapse of time he was brought again, and again it was demanded of him to take the oath of allegiance. On challenging the benefit of the laws of England, the presiding judge replied, “We are here to tell you what is law, and not you us. Therefore, sirrah, you are too bold.”

CROOK. “Sirrah is not a word becoming a judge. I am no felon; neither ought you to menace a prisoner at the bar, for I stand here arraigned as for my life and liberty, and the preservation of my wife and children, and outward estate—they being now at stake. Therefore, you ought to hear me, what I can say to the full in my own defence, and I hope the court will bear with me if I am bold to assert my liberty as an Englishman and a Christian. My innocence makes me bold, and if I speak loud it is my zeal for the truth and the name of the Lord.”

* Ellwood, p. 164.

JUDGE. "It is an evil zeal."

CROOK. "No, I am bold in the name of the Lord."

Still refusing, after several days' arraignment and discreditable interruption, to swear, though speaking in his own defence, Crook's mouth was stopped with a gag and dirty cloth, and he and two others were remanded back to Newgate. For thus refusing to take the oath of allegiance, the venal jury found a verdict to the effect that the prisoners had incurred a *præmunire*, which was the forfeiture of all their real estates during life, personal estates for ever, and to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure.* As we record this atrocious sentence against men, whose only scruple in respect to the oath was a religious one, and who were fully willing to promise allegiance and peaceable behaviour, one is inclined to question if this degenerate jury could belong to a nation who, in the Long Parliament, and on the fields of Naseby and Marston Moor, had vindicated the civil and religious liberties of England against the flagrant assumptions of a bigoted priest, a renegade statesman, and a despotic king.

This one example is sufficient to show the method taken to extirpate the Quakers, by not giving them any opportunity of defence after the indictment was read, by putting them instantly upon trial, with a predetermination to convict. A hundred more were indicted at the same sessions, and Newgate was so crowded that many of the imprisoned had to lie upon the leads of the prison all night. A vast number died from the heat of the season and infection combined, and the majority of such as survived were totally ruined by being kept away from the different employments by which they earned their bread. All this time the Bull and Mouth Meeting met with interruption as continuous as a calendar; some dispersions being more atrocious than others, though few passed away without bloodshed, for it may be well to recollect that one party was passive and unarmed, the other armed with "muskets, pikes, and halberts;" and now and then sheer cold-blooded murder ensued. The city magistrates, to their discredit, urged on these proceedings, not in respect to the Bull and Mouth Meeting only, but to others in Southwark, Horsleydown, Stepney, and Westminster. The common people sympathised greatly in these sufferings—it being common for them to say, as the Friends passed by their doors, guarded by constables or the trained-bands, "Ah! what woeful days are these, that honest people, with *such good countenances*, should be haled up and down to courts and prisons." They were indeed woeful days, though the worst were not yet come.

The Conventicle Act was the fruit of the year 1664. Its very name was a wanton and vicious insult. It was passed to inflict upon all persons above the age of sixteen, present at any religious meeting, in other manner than was allowed by the Church of England, where five or more persons besides the household should be present, a penalty

* Besse, vol. i. p. 379.

of three months' imprisonment for the first offence, of six for the second, and of seven years' transportation for the third, or to pay a fine of 100*l.* on conviction before a single justice of the peace. The ambiguous wording of the Act increased the cruelties it inflicted, as its construction being left to the interpretation of a single magistrate, the accused could rarely hope for justice. The Act likewise included that all who escaped or returned from transportation should suffer as felons without benefit of clergy; and it was soon a custom not to give a pass to a West Indian ship unless it would take some Quakers into banishment.*

The very constancy of the Friends, in holding meetings in their meeting-houses when possible, outside them when the doors were nailed up, and in the public streets when no other places were left, made them peculiarly the victims of this atrocious law. Multitudes of them were soon imprisoned for the second and third offence, and then transportation followed, their trials being hurried on with disgraceful precipitancy. Not content with persecuting the living, the bodies of the dead were seized. Two corpses of deceased Quakers were taken at midnight from the Bull and Mouth Meeting-House in September, 1664, under protest that people meant to assemble for their *triumphant* burial. Mile End Green and Wheeler Street Meetings were, like that of the Bull and Mouth, constantly molested. One of the men arrested at Mile End, on being brought before the justices, was asked where he dwelt. He answered, "I have a dwelling where neither thief, murderer, nor persecutor can come." Being asked where that was, he answered, "in God." For this answer he was sent to Bridewell as a *vagabond*; and upon his trial, making the same answer, he received sentence of transportation, and with three malefactors was sent to Virginia, and sold as a slave. During the Great Plague the persecution continued; fifty-two died in Newgate, and several in the Gatehouse; and being committed to the former whilst the pestilence was raging, it was, as Besse says, "like leading sheep to the slaughter."† Yet during this time of horror and desolation, the Five Mile, or Corporation Act, was passed; and though chiefly directed against the Presbyterians and Independents, it was not lost sight of in the persecution of the Quakers.

Between this period and 1670, when the third Act against conventicles was carried into law, there seems to have been a degree of cessation in these incredible atrocities against the rights of human liberty and conscience. But, if mere brute violence paused a little in its vicious industry, excommunication, imprisonment, distrains for non-payment of ecclesiastical demands, were still proceeded with. The system of extortion carried on against the Friends, is quite a feature of itself in their history. Bad as things were before, they were, after the passing of the New Act against conventicles, given up literally as prey to every informer. It was a common thing to

* Besse, vol. i. p. 393.

† Vol. i. p. 407.

wrench open their doors with sledge-hammers, and carry off everything a house contained, even to the very beds on which the sick or dying lay, and to the pannikin in which stood the infant's food.* Not a tool would be left to work with, or a horse to plough the land. In many instances these informers, when the owners were in gaol, would carry the keys of their houses about with them, and go in and out as they pleased, declaring, as William Howitt says, with grim humour, "that they would eat of the best and drink of the sweetest, and those rogues the Quakers should pay for all." The fines levied upon them were enormous. The sum of 16,400*l.* was paid by the Friends at Bristol alone; and from a careful examination of the records of the Society, it appears that property was taken and destroyed at that period, to the amount of upwards of one million sterling.

In the meanwhile, in the lull of this tempest, the meeting-house in White Hart Court, Gracechurch Street, had been built; and George Fox, upon his release from his lengthened imprisonment in Lancaster and Scarborough Castles, was the first to preach in it. But as soon as the Act of 1670 had passed, the congregation was on several occasions pulled out, and the doors at length nailed up, by an order in council. The meeting-house at Horsleydown was pulled down, and that at Ratcliffe denuded of doors, windows, and flooring. The Peel in St. John's Lane, Clerkenwell, also suffered.

But whilst the nation seemed thus to be hurrying on towards a civil and moral ruin, that should make her a by-word and a wonder in all ages to come, the lamp of Divine liberty was re-kindled through circumstances connected with the closing of this Gracechurch Street meeting-house. The reader is aware that we allude to the trial of Penn and Mead, both of whom were arrested outside this building on the 14th August, 1670. That trial is touched upon elsewhere in these pages, and needs not recapitulation, though one of the most important that ever dignified a court of justice. Penn not only pleaded as a Quaker, for right of conscience, but as an Englishman, for the constitutional liberties of his race. He disputed the legality of the Conventicle Act, and he triumphed—thanks to a jury that were men and not slaves, nor such as could be starved or intimidated into a lie. It was a day that Coke and Selden should have seen, for "it established a truth which William Penn never ceased to inculcate—that unjust laws are powerless weapons when used against an upright people. It proved that in England, at least, the ruling power of the moment, even when agreed in all its branches, was not omnipotent; that there still remained, and ever must remain, a grand check to unjust government in the public conscience. . . . The result proved that there was a power in the State superior to the Parliament in its palace at Westminster, and the King in his palace at Whitehall

* Sewel, p. 493.

combined—that sense of justice which informs the brain, and nerves the heart of the English people. Driven from the court, the legislative assembly, and the bench of justice, the spirit of Puritan Democracy found an impregnable city in the jury-room.” *

Though a noble principle was thus vindicated, and gradual reaction inevitable, as it had been ever since Vane had bowed his head upon the scaffold, the Conventicle Act, as a form of jurisprudence, yet remained to afflict the nation. The severity of its enforcement varied in accordance with the issue or withdrawal of what the Popish court styled “Declarations of Indulgence.” From a rare Broadsheet in the British Museum, issued as it would seem in 1683, for the use of Constables and Officers of the Peace, we find specified the nine following “unlawful meetings” of the people called Quakers. Bull and Mouth; Devonshire Buildings; Gracechurch Street; Quaker Street in Spitalfields; the Peel, Clerkenwell; Tothill Street, Westminster; Savoy, near the Church; Horsleydown; and Winchester Park, Southwark;” and from another Broadsheet addressed to the Bishops and Clergy of England and Wales, it is stated that up to that period, *twelve thousand three hundred and sixteen Quakers* had died, been imprisoned, remained in prison, suffered in their goods, been excommunicated or banished! Such are actual facts.

This same year, four young men, named Stamper, Snow, Whitaker, and Brooks, were indicted at the Old Bailey for riot, that is, having been present at a meeting in the Bull and Mouth. They pleaded not guilty, and desired that their word might be taken.

RECORDER. “No, we must have some bond. Think not that we will make new laws for you.”

WHITAKER. “Our words are as well as our bonds, and we hope that they may be taken.”

RECORDER. “That’s your presumption and pride, to conceit yourselves so much better than other men that your words must be as good as their bonds. That’s your great haughtiness of mind.”

WHITAKER. “No. It is the fear of God that makes us do as we say.”

Their trial was brought on in a few days; the charge from the bench to the jury being as severe as vindictiveness could make it. Upon evidence being given that these young men had been found at the Bull and Mouth, the Recorder exclaimed, “Ay, look ye, gentlemen (addressing the jury), there was a conventicle. That is to say, they met under pretence of religious worship.”

WHITAKER. “No, we were met under no pretence, but on purpose to worship God.”

STAMPER. “The evidence clears us from the fact charged, *viz.* ‘a riot with

* Dixon’s Life of Penn, p. 113.

force and arms to disturb the king's peace,' and tells you we were all in peace, not saying or doing anything—but all quiet."

RECORDER. "But you were met there under pretence of religion."

STAMPER. "No, in reality."

RECORDER. "For what?"

STAMPER. "On purpose to worship God."

The others replied that they had met "to worship God in spirit and in truth;" and one asked "if it were a crime now-a-days for people to be found worshipping God." The answer is a fine piece of justice's logic.

RECORDER. "No. But what you call worship, is no worship; and that religion, no religion; for all colours and pretences of religion, *not according to the religion now by law established, is null, and no religion at all, for it must be either according to, or opposite to the law, and religion established by it.* But yours is not according to it, but opposite."

The result was, that they were found guilty under the Act of 35th of Elizabeth, namely, "FOR SPEAKING AND DOING NOTHING," and cast into prison, where they remained during the severest weather of that inclement winter, rendered memorable by a fair held on the Thames. Such were the trivial incidents of a year, when

" Like a Roman, Sydney bowed his head,
And Russell's milder blood the scaffold wet."

Tyrant as he was, the condition of the Quakers was greatly improved by the accession of James II. He permitted them to substitute an affirmation instead of an oath, and in so doing stayed one cause of persecution. Penn had likewise opened an asylum for them in his new State of Pennsylvania. To their eternal honour be it said, that their general acts were in keeping with the faith they professed; and throughout the unparalleled history of their thirty years' suffering for conscience sake, there is no instance of vindictive retaliation, or the use of a weapon of sharper point than a text of scripture. The Toleration Act of King William III. recognised still more fully their right of conscience, and subsequent Acts put them at ease among their fellow-citizens. The question of tithes yet remains. These, as well as church-rates, they conscientiously refuse to pay just as much in our day, as in those of George Fox. Generally speaking, the matter is settled by a polite kind of subterfuge. But a revenue thus raised by a quibble, or a law invaded by an indirect method, must be one of two things, either bad in principle, or it must become obsolete. Were there no incorporation of Church and State, were ministers of religion supported by those who form their audiences and take benefit from their instruction, the vast revenue of the tithes of England—be it recollected that they are the rights of embodied Englishmen—would be free for the one great need of the

country, EDUCATION. As it is, whilst tithes remain one of the endowments of a Church preferred and supported by the State, they afflict other consciences than those of Quakers. Yes, the consciences of good men, who wish to see England's ancient and splendid endowments not garnered, as at present, for the luxury of a few, but scattered abroad as seed wherewith to sow future mental and religious harvests of incalculable price. If such conscientious scruples as those entertained by the Friends in relation to tithes harassed but a few, it would not so much matter; but their results spread far and wide. Let us take an example from Miss Martineau's admirable Letters from Ireland. "What a pity it is," she says, "that the Quakers cannot purchase in the Incumbered Estates Court. Everybody is sorry; they would make so admirable a class of purchasers. But the arrangement about tithes, precludes their buying those estates. . . . It has been very striking to us, that the one opinion in which we have found sensible, benevolent, well-informed, practical men most earnestly agreeing, throughout the length and breadth of the land, is this—that the best hope for Ireland lies in the settlement of British capitalists, who shall pay wages in cash, make no inquiry into any man's religion, do justly, lead a quiet life, and leave others in peace and quiet. This is the very description of the Quakers and settlers already here. Must the passage hither through the Incumbered Estates Court be closed against them alone?"*

George Fox survived till 1690. In the January of that year he came to London, and after preaching on the Sunday in the Gracechurch Meeting, he went to "Henry Gouldney's in White Hart Court, near the meeting-house." He had felt the cold, as he said, "strike to his heart."† He survived but two days, dying on Tuesday, January 13th, and being buried on the third day after in Bunhill Fields. That he was an extraordinary man there can be no doubt. The idea of human freedom he promulgated was the most enlarged of any that had been as yet thought out, or admitted. In relation to human rights he recognised no distinction of sex. He thus enfranchised even woman. He shared the extravagancies of his age, but he was two centuries before his age. The condition of prisons, the evils of capital punishment for mere stealing, the anti-Christianity of war, oaths, and slavery, were all objects denounced and stated by him. His followers have worthily imitated him in his great example "of peace on earth and goodwill to men." The formula of Quakerism is on the decline, but its best principles are vital. Peace, love, brotherhood, are essentials of human progress, and must advance with our individual efforts to teach, exalt, inspire. Formulas are but the crust of principles; they fall away as we proceed, and behold more clearly that we are the ministrants

"——— of One

Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs."

* Letters, p. 149.

† Sewel, p. 637.

CHAPTER XII.

HAMPSTEAD, ACTON, AND OXENDON STREET.—THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DAWN.

ON a summer's evening, early in July, 1660, the sun lay in its first decline, as tradition yet tells, upon the rich foliage of an avenue of elm-trees, that fringed the exquisite garden of a house newly built, upon the Old Manor of "Belsys," at Hampstead. Up and down this avenue, a gentleman, in the dress of the time walked meditatively to and fro; now crossing strips of flickering sunlight, now



VANE'S HOUSE, HAMPSTEAD.

masses of shadow that darker and darker fell, wrapt in the same sad meditations on the expired liberties of his country. None might so meditate more legitimately—for he had been amongst their noblest defenders, their most inflexible friend—it was Sir Henry Vane, the younger. Before the glory of that sunset had passed away, those strips of light much lessened, those shadows darker, the patriot had been arrested,

whilst still walking, by a crowd of armed soldiers and myrmidons of the law, and before night had wholly come, he was separated from his family, and on his way to a dungeon in the Tower. The house near which this took place Vane had built for himself. A portion of it, though much altered, still exists on the left-hand side of the steep hill leading into Hampstead. It was afterwards occupied, for a considerable period, by Dr. Butler, the author of the *Analogy of Religion*, and the tapestry which covered the apartments remained there till the beginning of the present century. The hall next the garden, and the wide staircase, are still preserved as when trodden by the illustrious patriot.

Beside its lovely scenery and its solitary stillness in those days, other circumstances must have made Hampstead a favourite place of residence with Vane. He had a daughter living at Caen Wood, hard by. She had been married twice. First to a Sir John Pelham, who died in 1654; and next to a person with the unaristocratic name of John Bill. From an old register, quoted by Lyson, we find that an infant daughter by this second husband was baptised at Caen Wood, June 13, 1661, whilst Vane must have been lying in the dungeons of Scilly. Yet full as Hampstead is of interesting associations—of its original great breadth of woodlands, in which roved a vast herd of swine at the taking of Domesday; of sweet brooks, and countless springs; of the grange of the abbots of Westminster; of the monk's house that stood on the old manor of "Belsyse," once the property of Sir Roger Le Brabazon, Lord Chief Justice of England in the reign of Edward II.; of northern armies encamped on its wild moorland; and of its more modern aspect as the haunt of poets, essayists, and writers, from the days of Steele and Richardson, to those of Keats, Wordsworth, and Sir Walter Scott, nothing exceeds in interest this fact of the arrest of the great patriot. Some fragments of this old avenue yet remain; and in the light of the great and ennobling truth, that genius under new and relevant aspects is ever appearing to aid the progress of this world of duty and endeavour, those old trees shadow in the daily work of our English Vandervelde—Clarkson Stanfield. The waves of the troublous ocean of despotism, are—let us hope for this country—passed and gone; we can therefore better appreciate oceans which have no danger, and storms which produce no fear!

Vane's arrest, and subsequent fate, were characteristic of a reign,

"By poets loathed; from which historians shrink,"

and not unaptly ushered in the sanguinary laws, popish councils, and general licentiousness of a Government which "had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute." * The House of Commons, which had voted back the

* Macaulay's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 22.

king, had consented to the exclusion of Vane from the Bill of Indemnity, only on the condition that he should not suffer death. But there can be no doubt, that from the moment of the Restoration, both the king and Clarendon resolved to effect the judicial murder of the great Parliamentary leader; and for this reason was it that he was kept in prison, "till a House of Commons more slavish and more zealous for royalty than that of the Convention Parliament, could be set on to clamour for his death." Their object was effected. He was brought back from Scilly to the Tower of London, and arraigned before the Court of King's Bench on the 2d of June, 1662. From thence, till the 11th of the same month, he stood day by day in that Court, undefended, denied the benefit of legal advice and consultation, and refused even the reading of the indictment upon which he was arraigned. He was charged with participation in the death of the king, and in subverting the constitutional Government. Of the one we know he was guiltless; of the other, happily guilty, if guilt there be, instead of glory, in raising up any class of human rights and liberties from their prostration beneath the feet of tyranny. Prejudged, he knew he was condemned; yet he defended himself, and what was more, the liberties of his country, with an eloquence and force never excelled. He spoke, as he told his venal judges, "not for his own sake only, but for theirs and for posterity." Finally he was brought up to receive his sentence, he being "too dangerous a man to let live, if we can honestly put him out of the way," as Charles informed Clarendon in a private note, dated from Hampton Court. As for the death to which his judges were about to condemn him, he said, "My Lords, I have otherwise learned Christ to fear them that can but kill the body, and have no more that they can do." He was sentenced to execution on Tower Hill, that place already hallowed by so many martyrdoms for the sake of liberty. With the spirit of a seer, who knew the unchangeable worth of the principles he was about to die for; who foresaw that his countrymen must, before long, awake to the bitter and stern realities their apostasy had inflicted upon mankind; who was conscious that with the fruition of evil the seeds of its ultimate destruction are sown and flourish, he said, amongst other things, in a prayer he made the day before his death, "I die in the certain faith and foresight that this cause shall have its resurrection in my death. My blood will be the seed sown, by which this glorious cause will spring up, which God will speedily raise." The day of his death was rather one of triumph than of sorrow. "From the tops of houses, and out of windows," as he ascended Tower Hill, "the people used such means and gestures as might best discover at a distance, their respect and love to him, crying aloud, 'The Lord go with you; the great God of heaven and earth appear in you and for you.'" He was clad in a scarlet silk waistcoat—the victorious colour—even in trivial things proclaiming the cause he loved, and astonishing all who were beholders by his cheerful presence and words. His speech on the scaffold was disgracefully interrupted. When he spoke of the

conduct of his corrupt judges, trumpets were blown in his face, and likewise when he began to refer to some proceedings in the Long Parliament. He patiently bore all, simply observing, "It is a bad cause which cannot bear the words of a dying man." And so praying, he knelt down before the block, and the executioner discharging "his dreadful office, one of the greatest and purest of men that ever walked the earth to adorn and elevate his kind, had left the world which was not worthy of him." *

It would be illogical to suppose that no spirit of vindictive retaliation would mark the return of the king and the Church to power; for both individuals and society must have reached a very high degree of moral and intellectual culture, before the lofty principle of returning good for evil can come actively into operation. This was not to be expected from a faction, giddy from the orgies of renovated and irresponsible power; but there was a cold-blooded atrocity in the execution of the ten regicides, in the exhumation of the remains of Cromwell, Ireton, and the illustrious Blake, and finally, in the execution of Vane—this last, "one of the most reprehensible acts of a bad reign"—which foretold fully all that subsequently followed.

Unlike the Royalists, who were left intensely dissatisfied by the settlement of affairs, the Church at once regained all, or more than, it had lost; though for a time, till the new power had made firm its footing, a decent show of respect was held towards the Presbyterians. This was short lived. A new Parliament, entirely Royalist in opinion, with the exception of some fifty or sixty Presbyterians who obtained seats, quickly evinced its spirit, by voting that all its members should receive the sacrament on a certain day, according to the rites of the Church of England, and that the Solemn League and Covenant should be burned by the hands of the common hangman. The Corporation Act followed. It necessitated that all such persons as then held, or thenceforth accepted, offices of trust in corporations, should swear that they believed it unlawful, on any pretence whatever, to take arms against the king; and that "those elected in future were, in addition to the same oaths, to have received the sacrament within one year before their election, according to the rites of the Church of England." This was the first direct blow at the civil and religious rights of Dissenters, as their strength chiefly lay in the corporate towns scattered about the country. An attempt was likewise made to restore the Star Chamber, but it died in the bud of its proposition.

The Presbyterians, from the beginning, had buoyed themselves up with their grand idea of a comprehension with the Church. Ten of their chief ministers had been appointed as his chaplains by the king, and some few sees were kept open in case of their compromise; but the meeting at the Savoy, for the purpose of settling the articles of comprehension signally failed. All the old scruples and opinions which had

* Forster, *Statesmen of Commonwealth*, vol. iv. p. 239.

embittered the religious mind of England from the days of Queen Elizabeth were started, opposed or defended—this with bigoted intolerance on both sides, and with one party intensely arrogant in its flush of recovered power, what other than failure could prove to be the result? But “the chief blame, it cannot be dissembled, ought to fall on the Churchmen. An opportunity was afforded of healing, in a very great measure, that schism and separation which, if they are to be believed, is one of the worst evils that can befall a Christian community. They had it in their power to retain or to expel a vast number of worthy and laborious ministers of the Gospel, with whom they had, in their own estimation, no essential ground of difference. They knew the king, and consequently themselves, to have been restored with (I might almost say by) the strenuous co-operation of those very men who were now at their mercy. To judge by the rules of moral wisdom, or the spirit of Christianity (to which, notwithstanding what might be satirically said of experience, it is difficult not to think we have a right to expect that a body of ecclesiastics should pay some attention), there can be no justification of the Anglican party on this occasion.”* There could be none, though the fault lay not so much with the men, as with the pernicious system of connecting a spiritual affair like religion, with questions of state, and confining it within this and that formula, as you would a charter or a law. Mr. Orme is right in saying that this “failure offers one of many illustrations of the folly of attempting to reconcile the principles of this world, with the laws and government of the kingdom of Christ.”† It was the last attempt made to reconcile Churchmen and Dissenters, in which the court and the authorities in the Church took a prominent part.

Richard Baxter, who had closed his singularly eminent services in Kidderminster in 1660, was one of the Presbyterians summoned to the Savoy Conference; but his narrow though well-meaning views were little calculated to pacificate, and the matter was concluded, by the king commanding the Convocation of the Church to review the Book of Common Prayer. When it came forth from their hands, it was still more exceptionable, and the general terms of conformity were thus rendered much harder than before the Civil War.‡ The temper of the Parliament was not a degree less inimical to the Dissenters than that of the Church, and the result was the Act of Uniformity, which restored, not only all such ceremonies and points as had been previously objected to, but contained fresh clauses, still more obnoxious to the Presbyterians. It enacted that every beneficed minister, fellow of a college, and even schoolmaster, should declare his unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything in the Book of Common Prayer, and that no person should hold any preferment in England, without having received Episcopal ordination.§ To these points every minister had to assent by the Feast of St. Bartholomew, 1662, or be then and there deprived of his benefice.

* Hallam, *Con. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 334.

† *Life of Baxter*, p. 213.

‡ Neal, vol. iv. p. 309.

§ Hallam, *Con. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 337.

Baxter, whose return to his flock at Kidderminster had been defeated through the arts of Morley, Bishop of Worcester, was the first to resign his connexion with the Church of England. He had preached occasionally at St. Dunstan's in the West and at St. Bride's, in Fleet Street, but, from scrupulous feelings, he declined even this occasional conformity three months before the Act came into operation. The day it did, two thousand persons resigned their preferments, rather than stain their consciences by compliance. The highest praise is their due. This was accorded to them even by their enemies, when the worst bitterness of those opposing times was past. "It may justly be said, that the Episcopal clergy had set an example of similar magnanimity, in refusing to take the Covenant. Yet as that was partly of a political nature, and those who were ejected for not taking it might hope to be restored through the success of the king's arms, I do not know that it was altogether so eminent an act of self-devotion as the Presbyterian clergy displayed on St. Bartholomew's day. Both of them afford striking contrasts to the pliancy of the English Church, in the greater question of the preceding century, and bear witness to a remarkable integrity and consistency of principle."* But both instances of deprivation are to be condemned; though, even granting that the principle of a Church establishment be correct, this latter case of deprivation had peculiar features of injustice and hardship. The high moral feeling which led men to prefer conscience to emolument—

"Their altars they forego, their homes they quit
Fields which they love, and paths they daily trod,
And cast the future upon Providence,"

was the undoubted fruit of that Puritanism now cast forth, in the noble examples of a Howe, a Manton, a Baxter, a Bates, an Owen, a Bridge, and a Calamy, from the bosom of a Church which had reaped such benefits from their ministry. For there can be no doubt that though the Court and Royalist faction were incredibly demoralized, that the large body of the people were in effect moral and religious, and that this cruel *post facto* law tended largely, in the end, to the ultimate triumph of the great principles of civil and religious freedom.

As soon, however, as it came fully into operation, the Presbyterian divines buoyed themselves up with new hopes of a toleration or indulgence that should exclude Papists and Socinians. The Independents, on the other hand, were divided in opinion, some being agreed for an exclusion of the Papists, whilst others saw no reason why the Papists should not have the same liberty for religious worship as other Dissenters. This was a true principle of religious freedom, and one worthy of the more advanced of the Independents; but this they were willing to forego, and even toleration for

* Hallam, Con. Hist, vol. ii. p. 339.

themselves, when they perceived—as all the Protestant Nonconformists soon did—what was concealed within the indulgences proffered to their acceptance. To their eternal honour be it said, for there was virtue even in their narrow views, that Presbyterians and Independents combined, were willing to suffer persecution and privation, rather than lend any countenance to acts which might lead to a State establishment of Popery, and the civil and religious degradation which was sure to follow. The Popish plots and counter-plots of this reign, were, there can be no doubt, for the larger part mere “baseless fabrics;” whilst in reality there existed one vast design, both throughout this and the succeeding reign, to bring this country again under the religious dominion of the Pope. But, thanks to the persecuted Nonconformists, we were saved from this gigantic evil. “To grant the Papist his right as a man, is one thing; to sanction his encroachments on the rights of others, or shut our eyes to the dangerous tendencies of his system is another. After allowing him to reach the level of his fellow-citizens, it is high time to form a barrier against the ambition that would overwhelm them, and say, ‘Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.’” * . . . The only practical question is, Can you allow the Papist to reach what he would consider ‘the level of his fellow-citizens,’ without, at the same time opening the door to that which would ‘overwhelm them?’” † If such be a question in our day, it was much more essentially one in that of Baxter’s, when the king was a ~~Catholic~~ ^{Romanist} and a pensionary of France.

During the year which produced the Conventicle Act, Baxter removed from a house he had taken in Moorfields, to Acton; a pleasant village, as the London reader knows, lying between Hammersmith and Ealing. In those days it was much more solitary than it is at present; and of its very ancient state, as a village lying amidst the solitudes of the great forest of Middlesex, we have a clear idea from the derivation of its name, Ac-ton, the town of oaks. Even at this day the hedgerows abound with this lovely forest-tree. As usual, the manor belonged to the Church—in this case, to the see of London. Baxter took a house opposite to the Church, where he constantly attended, and where he sometimes preached, having a license to that effect, provided he uttered nothing against the doctrines of the Church of England. It was this sort of occasional conformity that De Foe so ably exposed in the succeeding century, but to which Baxter’s conscience could submit. His contemporaries at Acton were Sir Matthew Hale, and for a time, at least, old Major-General Skippon, whose bravery at Naseby fight, and his words as he led on his troops to some desperate charge, “Come, my honest brave boys! let us pray heartily, and fight heartily, and

* *Eclectic Review*, quoted by Mr. Fletcher. Hist. of Independency, vol. iii. p. 97.

† Hist. of Independency. Ibid. to which the reader is referred for a most able statement on the subject.

God will bless us!" are memorable things. This fine old man—who by the way refused to sit as judge upon the trial of the king—must have lived some years in Acton, as he had a daughter married in the Church in 1655, by no less a person than Philip Nye, who succeeded Dr. Featly in the living; and in the succeeding year the general's wife was buried in the same place. Of course, both circumstances were entered into the parish register. Upon the Restoration, or more likely upon the enforcement of the Bartholomew Act, the king appointed Bruno Ryves, one of his chaplains, and Dean of Chichester, to this living, who procuring this register, and striking out "Right Honourable," and "General," wrote "*knave*," and "traytor," above the surnames. * Such was the low, paltry act, of a successor of—

"Those unconforming; whom one rigorous day
Drives from their cures, a voluntary prey
To poverty and grief, and disrespect,
And some to want—as if by tempest wrecked
On a wild coast;———"

Baxter's intimacy with Hale was immediate and enduring. It forms one of the most delightful episodes in the lives of these two good men, who were alike sincere and truthful. In 1668 they conjointly prepared a Bill on the subject of Toleration, but the bishops hearing of it, took measures accordingly; and Parliament, in its narrow bigotry, passed an immediate resolution, that no person should bring such a Bill into the House. Shortly after this, Baxter was summoned before the justices at Brentford, in consequence of a complaint made by the curate of the parish to his vicar, Bruno Ryves. After much disrespectful treatment, he was committed to Clerkenwell prison, for "holding a conventicle, not having taken the Oxford oath, and refusing it when tendered to him." This "conventicle" being, his family worship, at which strangers would sometimes come. In this prison we catch a pleasant glimpse of his admirable wife. "My imprisonment was, at present, no great suffering to me, for I had an honest jailor, who showed me all the kindness he could. I had a large room, and the liberty of walking in a fair garden. My wife was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison; and was very much against my seeking to be released. She had brought so many necessaries, that we kept house as contentedly and as comfortably as at home, though in a narrower room; and had the sight of more of my friends in a day, than I had at home in half a year. I knew also, that if I got out against their will, my sufferings would never come to an end. But yet, on the other side, it was in the extreme heat of summer, when London was wont to have epidemical diseases. The hope of my dying in prison, I have reason to think, was one great inducement to some of the instruments to move what they did."† Though suffering as usual from

* Register, quoted by Lysons.

† Life, pt. iii. p. 55.

bad health, he would not let Sir Matthew Hale interfere in his behalf, lest he should involve himself in trouble; and he was finally released, owing to a flaw in his indictment. But there was now to be little rest for this good and admirable man. Not daring to go to Acton, or within five miles of a corporate town, he went to Totteridge, near Barnet. The next year the odious Conventicle Act was revised, with several fresh clauses, which, as Baxter fancied, had been applied to his case. It was enforced with incredible rigour. Every meeting in London was disturbed by armed soldiers, and the prisons were filled. Baxter was, at this time, offered a Scotch bishopric, by the Earl of Lauderdale, but he was not to be tempted. He wrote him, however, a most affecting letter, where he stated he could have no peace; that every venal preacher that wanted preferment wrote against him, that he was not allowed to live quietly, to follow his private studies, or even use his books, which had been shut up in a hired room at Kidderminster, eaten by worms and rats, by the reason that he had no secure abode wherein to receive them. Such was Baxter's case amidst a thousand others.

The worst period of the Cabal ministry had now arrived, and one of its most flagrant steps towards arbitrary power was closing the exchequer. Most of the money Baxter possessed he had placed therein; it was therefore lost to him. The Declaration of Indulgence was the fruit of the succeeding year. It was a measure brought forward by the Earl of Shaftesbury, who was, it is supposed, assisted in its elaboration by the suggestions of no less a personage than Locke,* and though it seems probable that Shaftesbury's immediate designs were not inimical to the great body of Dissenters, there can be no manner of doubt that those of the Court were profoundly so; and the very pretension of suspending or repealing, at will, Acts passed by the legislature—however inimical such might be to liberty of opinion or religious worship, was an assumption of absolute power of the worst description. Baxter, however, availed himself of a license, and lectured for a few weeks at Pinner's Hall; but not agreeing with the Independents gathered there, he removed his lectureship to a Chapel in New Street, Fetter Lane, in which Dr. Thomas Goodwin occasionally preached.† He now changed his residence from Totteridge to a "pleasant and commodious house" in Bloomsbury Square, then newly built; Southampton House occupying the whole north side, with its gardens stretching away to the fields. Unlike Baxter, the general body of Nonconformists saw clearly the motives which had actuated the passing of the Indulgence; and though as desirous of religious liberty as earnest men could be, they were for receiving it as their right, and not as the favour of an arbitrary monarch, whom they well knew was not their friend. They looked also to the preservation of the national liberties and the welfare of their country, rather than to their own conve-

* Lord King's *Life of Locke*, vol. i. p. 40.

† Wilson's *Dissenting Churches*, vol. iii. p. 420.

nience or ease ; and they therefore joined in the public demand for the revocation of an Act which was but an instrument in the hands of the Popish and Court factions for ends still more pernicious and destructive. As a further security against Catholic *Romish* ascendancy, both Houses passed the Test Act in the following year, and considering that it involved the secondary effect of excluding Nonconformists, as it necessitated the receiving of the sacrament according to the Church of England, and swearing to the oath of supremacy, before holding any office, military or civil—both Presbyterians and Independents gave an eminent proof of disinterestedness in affording to it both support and countenance. A Bill was however brought in, and passed both Houses, repealing in a measure the persecuting laws against Nonconformists ; but an end was put to it by a sudden prorogation, much to the gratification of both the Court and Church parties.

Persecution now began again in earnest. At the instigation of the bishops, whom the king called together, the licenses to preach were withdrawn by proclamation, and Baxter was almost one of the first to suffer. Keeling, a notorious informer of the day, procured, after some difficulty, a warrant against him, for preaching at a private house, as his lease of the great room over St. James's Market, in which for a time he had been accustomed to preach, had then expired. The warrant was found to be illegal, and he was released ; though a prosecution was issued against him for a fine of three-score pounds, for two sermons he had preached. The owner of the house was also heavily fined. Baxter's condition was at this time terrible. His goods were being constantly distrained, till he parted with what he had. In order to save some portion of his library, his wife removed and hid such of his books as she could. In this way many volumes were lost ; and finally, after giving others to friends, a large portion were sent as a present to Harvard University in America. Yet, instead of weakly repining, his noble wife encouraged him to bear this loss, of what he affectingly calls in his *Life*, "his treasure ;" and what was more, undeterred by the terrors of that dark time, she resolved to provide him with a place of worship. She accordingly, at her own cost, hired a piece of ground on a short lease, in Oxendon Street, Haymarket, then but lately built, or indeed building. On this she erected a chapel for his use, as well as two houses, which, facing the street, hid it from view. Such was but one of many similar labours of this admirable woman, to whose care her husband left all his temporal concerns.*

Piccadilly, the Haymarket, and Leicester Fields were at that time quite suburban places, only begun to be built upon within a few years. The former was as yet a mere country road, with fields stretching towards St. James's. On its northern side stood Clarendon's stately house, built, as popular report went, with his proceeds from the

* Wilson's Dissenting Churches, vol. iv. p. 52.

infamous sale of Dunkirk. There were also Burlington and Berkeley Houses on the same side. At the rear of Baxter's chapel was the house of Mr. Secretary Coventry, and unfortunately for the result, the preacher might as well have settled down in a nest of hornets. One Sunday he preached undisturbed; the next, three justices of the peace were sent with a warrant to arrest him, but being accidentally absent, the storm fell upon Mr. Sedden, a minister that Mrs. Baxter had procured to officiate in her husband's place. This person was dragged off to prison, where he remained some time, till released through the influence of Sir Matthew Hale. Baxter had to pay 20*l.* for his prison fees. For a year he dare not himself preach in the chapel, though a door had been so contrived as to admit of immediate escape into his own house. If he did preach, drums were beaten by Mr. Secretary Coventry's orders beneath the chapel windows, so that no one could hear him; this tool of the Government "being indignant that a sect of schismatics should fix their quarters so near his dwelling." In such wise was religion suppressed, whilst the profligacy of the Court was drawing down upon itself the execrations of all reasonable men; whilst hundreds rotted in gaols, or were encompassed by absolute ruin; whilst Catholics in England, and Cove-*Tonans* nanTERS in Scotland were slaughtered like sheep in the shambles; and whilst the very worst aggression of this bad reign was active in depriving London and other places of their charters.

Yet Baxter's cup was not full. He lost his wife, from what seems to have been a sudden illness. She died at his house in Bloomsbury Square, June 14, 1681. In the succeeding year, whilst in very ill health, and upon returning from a brief visit into the country, he was seized whilst preaching in New Street Chapel, Fetter Lane, by an informer, constables, and officers, for coming within five miles of a corporation. Five warrants of distrainment were at the same time out against him for the sum of one hundred and ninety pounds, as fines for preaching five sermons! His physician interfered and saved him at this moment from the horrors of a gaol, by swearing that his imprisonment involved certain death; but all his goods were distrained, even to the bed he lay on, and would have been carried off, but that some friends paid down the money they were priced at. Yet so useless was resistance, that as Baxter wrote, "if they had taken only my cloak, they should have had my coat also; and if they had smitten me on one cheek, I would have turned the other, for I knew the case was such, that he that will not put up with one blow, one wrong, or slander, shall suffer two; yea, many more. For when they had taken and sold all, and I had borrowed some bedding and necessaries of the buyer, I was never the quieter, for they threatened to come on me again, and take all as mine, whatsoever it was, which they found in my possession, so that I had no remedy but utterly to forsake my house and goods and all, and take secret lodgings at a distance in a stranger's house; but having a long lease of my own house, which binds me to pay a greater rent than it is now worth,

wherever I go I must pay that rent.”* His chapel was also at this time a great loss. Being not suffered to preach in it, it was taken in use as a Chapel of Ease, for the parish of St. Martin’s in the Fields. The incumbent, Dr. Lloyd, paying the ground rent. But for the building his wife’s love and tenderness had raised, Baxter never received a shilling; on the contrary, it was a loss to him of 400*l*.† At this date likewise, Baxter had 600*l*. left to him by a citizen of Oxford, for distribution amongst suffering and ejected ministers; but it was sued for in Chancery by the king’s attorney, and paid over to the monarch by Lord Keeper North. It was fully returned to Baxter at the Revolution. In 1684, Baxter had warrants again issued against him, and those who came in search of him kept him in his study without his bed or food till he would unlock the door. He was then bound over in the sum of 400*l*. to keep good behaviour. But the law though thus penal was not always triumphant. In the case of the Rev. Thomas Roswell, who was indicted at the instance of three infamous women, for treasonable words said to have been contained in a sermon, the Crown was defeated. Roswell made so able a defence as to lead to his acquittal, though it unfortunately lessened neither the sufferings of the great body of the people nor the despotism of the Government. Indeed, no pen can adequately describe the infamy of these last years of the reign of Charles II. The promulgation of the tenets of absolute power from the pulpits of almost every church, kept pace with the prostitution of justice in every tribunal of the land. Nothing, perhaps, proves more the evils springing from an alliance of religion with civil power, than this worst feature of it—its ability to cover under the formula of pulpit-words, the vilest doctrines of moral slavery and pernicious absolutism.

The Nonconformists had nothing to hope from the advent of the reign of James II. They had taken too decided a part in measures meant to exclude him from the throne, for them to be otherwise than the objects of his intense hatred and revenge. The courts of justice and the majority of the Crown lawyers were his ready instruments; whilst his vindictiveness was fertile in pretexts. Undoubtedly, with a view of striking terror in all classes of Nonconformists, by the punishment of so good and eminent a man, Baxter, who had been designed for gaol before the death of Charles II., as was evident from his being bound in his good behaviour, was arrested under pretext of treasonable words said to be contained in his “Paraphrase of the New Testament.” He was committed to the King’s Bench by the warrant of the notorious Jeffreys, in which this simple controversial pamphlet was described as “a scandalous publication against the Government.” Baxter applied for a writ of Habeas Corpus, obtained it, departed into the country, but returned in due time. He then requested that his trial might be postponed on account of indisposition, but

* Life, by Himself, pt. iii. p. 191.

† Clarke’s Lives, p. 188.

Jeffreys, who was present in court when the application was made, cried out, "I will not give him a moment more to save his life. We have had to do with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with, and I know how to do with saints as well as sinners. Yonder," said he, "stands Oates in the pillory (as he actually did at that time in New Palace Yard), and he says he suffers for the truth, and so says Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there."

Jeffreys had already earned eternal infamy by his incredible adjudications and foul language. But the latter, as if brought to a climax on this occasion of Baxter's trial, outdid in grossness and indecency any that had yet been heard in a court of justice. The trial took place in Guildhall, Baxter being attended by his admirable friend, Sir Henry Ashurst, who had, to his great honour, fee'd the best counsel for the defence, and when the judge and victim were brought face to face, the one composed and earnest, the other with flaming eyes and fierce looks, it was, as a spectator afterwards remarked to Calamy, "like St. Paul being brought before Nero." Through the course of the trial tears flowed from many eyes; and Jeffreys "drove on," says the same authority, "furiously, like Hannibal over the Alps . . . pouring all the contempt and scorn upon Baxter, as if he had been a linkboy or knave, which made the people who could not come near enough to hear the indictment or Mr. Baxter's plea, cry out, 'Surely this Baxter had burned the city or temple of Delphos.' But others said, it was not the custom now-a-days to receive ill except for doing well, and, therefore, this must needs be some good man my lord rails at."*

Baxter prayed for a jury of learned men, on account of the nature of the charge, but it was over-ruled, though the notorious Sir Roger L'Estrange and Dr. Sherlock had been employed to pick out the passages considered obnoxious to the king, and more particularly to the prelates of the Church of England. The following are two brief clauses amongst others which gave offence.

"Priests now are many, but labourers are few. What men are they that hate and silence the faithfullest labourers, suspecting they are not for their interest."

"To be dissenters and disputants against errors and tyrannical impositions, is no fault, but a great duty."

Jeffreys' first assault was upon Pollexfen, one of Baxter's counsel, who, naturally enough, spoke in behalf of his client. For this offence—for offence it was, Jeffreys cried out, "Pollexfen, I know you well; I will set a mark upon you; you are the patron of the faction. This is the old rogue who has poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. Don't we know how he preached formerly. . . . He encouraged all the women and maids to bring their bodkins and thimbles to carry on

* Baxter MSS. quoted by Mr. Orme.

their war against the king of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave ; a hypocritical villain."

Mr. Pollexfen besought here that he might be suffered to speak in behalf of his client without interruption, and added, that Mr. Baxter was so well known for his loyal and peaceable spirit, "that King Charles would have rewarded him with a bishopric if he would have conformed."

"Aye, aye," said Jeffreys, "we know that. But what ailed the old blockhead, the unthankful villain, that he would not conform ? Was he wiser or better than other men ? He hath been ever since the spring of the faction. I'm sure he hath poisoned this world with his linsey-woolsey doctrine." At this point his rage was uncontrolled. He called Baxter a conceited stubborn fanatical dog. Adding, "Hang him ; this one old fellow hath cast more reproach upon the constitution and discipline of our Church, than will be wiped off these hundred years ; but I'll handle him for it—for, by God, he deserves to be whipped through the City."

Pollexfen then pleaded that it was hard for men to be punished for conscience' sake ; and the next counsel in order, boldly declared, that though Baxter's comments could not be proved to refer to the bishops of the present time, yet there had been bishops that "were the plagues of the Church and the world." Like Pollexfen, he was grossly insulted, and finding it useless to contend, sat down. Another counsel proved from a sentence in one of Baxter's works, that he had inculcated respect "to those truly called to be bishops." "Baxter for bishops," cried Jeffreys, "that's a merry conceit indeed. . . . Aye, this is your Presbyterian cant—truly called to be bishops, that is, himself and such rascals, called to be bishops of Kidderminster and other such places. Bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling Presbyterians as himself ; a Kidderminster bishop he means, according to the saying of a late learned author,—and every parish shall maintain a tithe-pig metropolitan." Baxter beginning here to speak in his own defence, Jeffreys thus reviled him, "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll have thee poison the court ? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave ; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the Gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave ; it is time for thee to begin to think what account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself, and I see thou'lt go on as thou hast begun ; but by the grace of God, I'll look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of their mighty Don, and a Doctor of the party (looking at Dr. Bates who was present) at your elbow ; but by the grace of Almighty God, I'll crush you all. Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave ? come, speak up. What doth he say ? I'm not afraid of you, for all the snivelling calves you have about you." Alluding to many that he saw in tears.

"Your Lordship need not," was Baxter's temperate reply, "for I'll not hurt you. But these things will be surely understood one day ; what fools one sort of Protestants are made to persecute the other." And lifting up his eyes to heaven added, "I'm not concerned to answer such stuff ; but am ready to produce my writings for the confutation of all this ; and my life and conversation are known to many in this nation."

The other counsel present then attempted to speak in reference to other questions, but gross insult following, they left Jeffreys to his infamous summing up. It was in keeping with what had foregone, and the jury found Baxter *guilty*.* As he left the court, he remarked to the Lord Chief Justice, that "A predecessor of his had other thoughts of him." Upon this Jeffreys replied, "That there was not an honest man in England but what took him, Baxter, for a great rogue." When brought up for judgment, the sentence against him was, "To pay a fine of five hundred marks, to lie in prison till it was paid, and to be bound in his good behaviour for seven years." It is said that Jeffreys proposed that Baxter should be whipped through the City, but his brethren not consenting, the fine and imprisonment were agreed to.

Such was one of the most infamous trials of that infamous period. It was the fitting prelude of that western campaign, in connexion with which Jeffreys' atrocities led in no small degree to the downfall of his master, and that approaching day when he was himself hunted to the Tower, with the rabble cry of "vengeance" and "justice" at his heels. Master and servant were akin. It was Jeffreys that suggested to the king the establishment of the celebrated ecclesiastical commission, on the pivot of whose proceedings, with respect to Magdalene College, Oxford, the Revolution turned. Willing to depress the Church of England party, who manifested the strongest opposition to his designs in favour of Catholic supremacy, James and his High Commission Court laid a hand on their privileges, and lo ! all the venal doctrines of Divine right, which had resounded from the pulpits of the land, were changed into invitations to a new king. "The royal prerogative had been magnified to the skies in theological works ; the doctrine of passive obedience had been preached from innumerable pulpits ; the University of Oxford had sentenced the works of the most moderate Constitutionalists to the flames ; the accession of a Catholic king, the frightful cruelties committed in the west of England, never shook the steady loyalty of the clergy. But did they serve the king for nought ? He laid his hand on them, and they cursed him to his face. He touched the revenues of a college, and the liberties of some prelates, and the whole profession set up a yell worthy of Hugh Peters himself. Oxford sent her plate to an invader with more celerity than she had shown when Charles I. requested it. Nothing was said about resistance till resistance had done its work, till the anointed vice-regent of Heaven had been driven

* State Trials, vol. xi. p. 500.

away, and till it had become plain that he would not be restored, or would be restored at least under strict limitations. The clergy went back, it must be owned, to their old theory, as soon as they found it would do them no harm.”*

But to return to Baxter. He went to prison, being unable to pay the fine ; and well knowing that if he did, he would be prosecuted again under some frivolous pretence or another. His place of incarceration was a private house, near the King's Bench, in Southwark. Here he was attended by his own servants, and visited by many friends who sympathized in his sufferings. On the whole, this imprisonment, which lasted nearly two years, was more a time of repose and happiness than he had long known. He was finally released in November, 1686, upon giving security for good behaviour. In the February of the following year he removed to a house he had hired in Charter House Yard, in which he resided till his death. This took place December 8, 1691. He was buried in Christ Church, in the grave with his wife ; the church at that time being raised anew from its ruins by the hand of the great Wren.

In collecting the materials for this book, many well-authenticated likenesses of the old Nonconformist divines have come before us, but none with such effect as that of Richard Baxter's. In the fine and massive face of Owen there is infinitely more power ; in that of Thomas Goodwin, more humour ; but none approach that of Baxter's in its intense expression of charity, perfect goodness, and an all-patient love. Sweetness, gentleness, intense benevolence, so sit upon those beautiful lips and chin, that Raffaele might have painted both in one of his imaginary countenances of Christ. So wonderful is this *spiritual* expression, this outshining of the soul from the doors of earth which environs it, that we would like Baxter's pictured face to hang upon our most familiar walls, as an exquisite invitation to practise the meekness, the goodness, the all-pervading benevolence which outshine therefrom. “In speaking of Baxter,” says Mr. Orme, “I have no better or more appropriate term which I can employ than the word *unearthly* ; and even that does not give a full view of all that was absent from, and all that belonged to his character as a Christian, a minister, and a divine. Among his contemporaries there were men of equal talent, of more amiable disposition, and of greater learning. But there was no man in whom there appears to have been so little of earth, and so much of heaven ; so small a portion of the alloy of humanity, and so large a portion of that which is celestial.” And, “in studying the character of Richard Baxter, while I would do honour to the man and justice to his talents, while I would speak in the strongest terms of his genius and his eloquence, while I would venerate him as the leader of the noble army of Nonconformist confessors, whose labours and sufferings have secured for them a deathless renown, I would, above all, contemplate him as the MAN OF GOD, strong in faith, rich in the

* Macaulay, *Essays*, vol. i. p. 88.

fruits of love, and adorned with the beauties of holiness. In these respects he had probably few equals, and no superior, even in an age when eminent characters were not rare." * Yet such a man, the last and basest of the Stuart-kings consigned to the tender mercies of the atrocious Jeffreys.

Through those twenty-eight years, which it would be well if we could blot out from the history of our race and nation ; "when the principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the Anathema Maranatha of every fawning dean," there can be no doubt that all the abstract points on which these principles rest, gathered a vast, if latent, moral force throughout the bulk of the people. For liberty may superficially exist, may be the offspring of faction, or of temporary laws ; and it may exist as principles in the moral life of a people, gathering strength day by day, adding thereto wisdom and integrity, till in its own good time it comes forth to view, powerful, irresistible, wide-spreading. The precious liberties begot and secured through the means of the Long Parliament, were rather accepted by the majority who enjoyed them, as benefits, than perceived to be principles, and so were more lightly valued than they should have been ; but when the change came, when liberty was contrasted with a practical despotism that had no parallel, then liberty, which could not be said to exist otherwise than in an abstract form, was traced to its ultimate foundation in inalienable human rights. With what effect the Revolution showed ; for unless opinion had advanced, as it had, and was prepared to co-operate with any movement in behalf of the grand rights of humanity, the change would not have been so decidedly or so peacefully effected. In spite of all which had been attempted and achieved by both Charles and James against the liberties of the nation, there were boundaries set by the immortal Long Parliament, which despotism, flagrant as it was, did not dare to overstep ; and so far from being an object of lament, we quite think, with Mr. Hallam, that the bigoted predilection of the last two Stuart kings for popery, and a papist supremacy, was "to be accounted rather amongst the most signal links in the chain of causes through which a gracious Providence favoured the consolidation of our liberties and welfare." †

It was at the period of this new birth of the liberties of the nation that John Locke stood forward as the advocate of general and impartial liberty. He had been compelled, in order to escape the malice of James II., to make his escape to Holland. During his concealment there, he wrote his celebrated "Letter on Toleration," and returning at the period of the Revolution, he negotiated the terms of the Act of Toleration, though they fell far short of both his desire and intention. Yet, imperfect as it was, it may be styled the first charter of religious liberty. It probably granted as much religious freedom as the prejudices of the times would admit ; for even the

* Orme's Life of Baxter. pp. 410, 411.

† Con. Hist. vol. ii. p. 216.

master-mind of Locke himself was not without a degree of narrowness in relation to certain views which he conceived did *not* admit of toleration ; but this, as Mr. Edmonds has very ably remarked, “ involves the absurdity of protecting all religious dogmas, however erroneous, but exposing abstract and philosophical opinions to legal pains and penalties.”* In fact, Locke, like Bacon, enunciated principles, that in essential and ultimate effects went far beyond both their own individual practice and practical opinions. Men are in this way, if we may use such a paradox, often greater than themselves. They can, as it were, lay the foundations, though not build up the after-edifice of truth. The great opinion, therefore, of the Essay on Toleration—that *opinion is not a matter cognizable by the civil magistrate*—served all the essential purposes of that time ; whilst the still grander and more philosophical idea, which forms, in fact, the *one* great truth of the Essay on the Human Understanding, “ that reason must be our last judge and guide in everything,” does away, in practical effect, with all mental slavery whatsoever. “ He who makes use of the light and faculties God has given him, and seeks sincerely to discover truth by the helps and abilities he has, may have this satisfaction in doing his duty as a rational creature, that though he should miss truth, he will not miss the reward of it. For *he* governs his assent right and places it as he should, who, in every case or matter whatsoever, believes or disbelieves according as reason directs him. He that does otherwise transgresses his own light and misuses those faculties, which were given him to no other end but to search and follow the clearer evidence and greater probability.”† Belief being thus the result of individual appeal to reason, it is necessarily wholly independent of the will, and a fitting subject neither for praise nor blame, far less an object for punishment or reward. In such an axiomatic result, we arrive at the true point of the doctrines of the Independents ; for sects founded on the right of private judgment have a natural tendency to purify the opinions they hold. These, therefore, which were imperfect in the beginning, it was Locke’s immortal honour to perfect, thus assisting in the priceless service of delivering the world from the thralldom of error and prejudice. The correction of the general habits of thought is, as Sir James Mackintosh well said, “ the greatest service which can be rendered to science.”‡ In this respect the merit of Locke is unrivalled ; his writings have diffused throughout the civilized world the love of civil liberty, and the spirit of toleration and charity in religious differences. These services have yet an advanced ultimatum, which others will carry onward to no less legitimate purposes of social and individual well-being.

* Notes to Letter on Toleration, p. 39.

† Locke’s Works, vol. iii. p. 125.

‡ *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxxvi.

CHAPTER XIII.

STOKE NEWINGTON AND FREEMAN'S COURT, CORNHILL.—EFFETE OPINIONS IN THE PULPIT.

STOKE NEWINGTON, as many of the other villages round London, sprung up upon the primitive clearings of the Great Forest of Middlesex, in the early days preceding the Conquest. Indeed, it may have had a prior origin, as the Roman way of Ermin Street crossed its site, and so passed on for miles through the dense woodland. Its name betrays the sylvan landscape anciently around it, Stoke meaning wood ; and at the taking of Domesday, it was the New-town in the wood—a solitary place as we may well conceive ; but very lovely, with its cool glades and sylvan brakes, when the year was in its vernal or autumnal glory. It might be, scenes were there, such as—

“Lorraine light touched with softening hue ;
Or savage Rosa dash'd ; or learned Poussin drew.”

Even so lately as 1649, a remnant of the great forest, seventy-seven acres in extent, lay round Newington ; and two centuries previously, in the reign of Henry VI., the woodland stretched from Houndsditch behind the walls of London to Newington, and so onward to the north for miles. The manor was a very ancient possession of the prebends of St. Paul's, who held, it is said, documents of peculiar value and interest in relation to it ; but these, with countless others of equal value, perished with St. Paul's in the Great Fire. The loss in this respect was irreparable, and cannot but be regretted by the English antiquary and historian.

On this account of its sylvan character, Newington was a great place of royal resort, both in the Middle Ages as well as afterwards. Henry VIII. went thither constantly to hawk and hunt ; and it was a noted scene of his less innocent pleasures. Till far into the present century, houses built in his reign, and even previously, were in existence. In 1550 the manor was leased out by the prebends of St. Paul's, to a person of the name of Patten, who seems in turn to have let the very beautiful old manor-house to some titled member of the Dudley family. Whilst so occupied, it formed the residence of the Princess Elizabeth during a portion of the reign of Queen Mary ; and when she herself ascended the throne she came hither to visit her favourite, Leicester. There is still a walk between two rows of lofty elms called “Queen Elizabeth's walk.” Here it was, for a time, that Leicester concealed his marriage with Lady Essex, the mother of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, whose

history we have briefly touched upon in the chapter on the Tower. Here she was known only as Lady Essex, and under that name, the death of one of her servants is entered in the old parish-books. Being probably a favourite place of residence, the manor itself was purchased by a member of this family, a John Dudley, in 1571, who dying in 1580, had a funeral as pompous as a king. The account preserved of its expenses is most curious and valuable. His widow married Thomas Sutton, founder of the Charter-house ; who was thus one of the illustrious residents of Newington. At the sequestration under the Long Parliament, the manor was bought by Colonel Popham ; from him it finally passed to the Abneys, whose connexion through several generations with Nonconformist history, is of a most interesting character.

Some two years after the withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence, and whilst persecution was raging anew in all parts of the country, Stoke Newington, though but thinly inhabited, had some good men among the number. Secluded as it was, this little place was the very stronghold of liberal opinion both in politics and religion ; for here lived Fleetwood ; his second wife Bridget Ireton, the eldest daughter of Cromwell ; Sir John Hartopp, Fleetwood's son-in-law ; and on Newington Green was kept the most famous dissenting academy of the age. Its master was the Rev. Charles Morton, who, amongst his scholars in 1675, had an awkward, red haired, large nosed lad, by name Daniel Foe, or as he afterwards styled it, De Foe. We do not know the richness of a soil till the seed we scatter has produced its harvest ; but the school-master would, we think, have been well repaid for his necessitated exile, if he had lived long enough to learn the power of his scholar's trenchant pen in the behalf of liberty in the State and liberty for religion. The schools of Dissenters had lain for a considerable time under peculiar hardships. One of the effects of the Act of Uniformity had been to close many of them, as the majority of the masters could not assent to many things contained in the Book of Common Prayer ; and where they were fortunate enough to keep open doors, it was generally through an amount of personal suffering, disturbance, and surprisal, that appears incredible to us who live in more peaceful times. Yet where these schools were suffered to exist, they flourished ; the course of instruction was generally of a high order, as the universities being closed against Dissenters, it necessarily comprehended all the essentials of a learned education. Morton suffered peculiar hardships. He was an eminent man, and his Nonconformity gave great offence ; he was therefore subject to all kinds of intrusion from spies and informers. The processes in the bishop's courts were so continuous against him, that at length, worn out by vexations, which seemed without end, he left this country for New England, in 1685. There his talents were appreciated, peace was his, and he was chosen vice-president of Harvard University.

Though more a painter of humanity than of external nature, the quiet, wooded scenery of Newington could not have been without its rich effects upon one like the

young De Foe. There was greenness, and freshness, and primitiveness all around. The New River ran there as now, with the story cleaving to it of lessened though not ruined fortunes. There was the old manor-house with its picturesque gables, fine gardens, and an old monastic-looking gateway, beneath which Elizabeth and Leicester and others of note had ridden; there was a pretty brook with an island attached to grounds belonging to a mansion afterwards occupied by Lady Abney, the friend of Dr. Watts; and a conspicuous object in the village when De Foe and the future father of the Wesley's roved about as schoolboys, was Fleetwood's house—an old red-bricked mansion of the days of Elizabeth, but which he had altered in the upper part, for the concealment of persecuted Nonconformists.* The door of this chamber was hidden by hangings; and here it probably was that secret worship was often carried forward; though not always successfully, for in 1685, a gang of informers broke in upon Fleetwood, Sir John Hartopp, and other inhabitants of Newington, whilst engaged in worship, and levied distresses upon their goods to the value of some 70000*l*. A fragment of this old house yet remains; and in the gardens still flourishes a fine cedar-tree, said to have been planted by Fleetwood's hand.

It was not likely, that the absurd principles of absolute power and non-resistance, first broached in the reign of James I., and brought to a climax in those of his grandsons, till the majority of the pulpits rang with no other lesson than the holiness of tyranny on the one hand, and the excellence of prostrate submission on the other, should die a natural death with the Revolution. That effected, and ecclesiastical place and revenue secured from Catholic ascendancy, the old doctrines, like the frozen snake in the fable, soon revived. During the reign of the great William, they were productive of little other effect than the general one, of thwarting any further concessions to Dissenters, and so far as the non-jurors were concerned, of plots to bring back the tyrant they had expelled, this, with the intended limitation, that the rights and revenues of the Church should be fully secured to themselves. Nothing but the king's firm determination to secure toleration to Dissenters, prevented the renewal of persecution by the Church party. Upon the accession of Anne, whose leanings were all in favour of sacerdotal power, both spiritual and temporal, the opportunity was not lost of renewing hostilities. The pulpits were made the scene of this inglorious warfare against the civil and religious rights of the community; the High Church faction, not perceiving, in its shallow venality, that it was the mere tool of a set of worthless and designing statesmen. Persecution, unmitigated persecution, against all dissenting from its own slavish doctrines, was the great and unwearied cry of these pulpit demagogues; whilst the rest of their brethren, who were willing to treat Dissenters with moderation, who were steadfast in their advocacy of the principles of

* Robinson's Stoke Newington, p. 11—42.

the Revolution, and equally resolved to negative all the purposes of the Jacobites in favour of the young son of the late king, were stigmatized as favourers of Presbyteries and ill-affected to the Church. These latter were styled Low Churchmen, whilst their opponents, exalted by their own debasement, gloried in the title of High Church. Between the two a storm soon raged, and Dissenters felt the effects. Amongst the inflamed, yet weakest bigots of this High Church party, was Dr. Sacheverell, already celebrated, for what an old pamphlet styles, "his pulpit airs." In a sermon entitled, "The Political Union: a discourse showing the dependence of Government on Religion in general, and of the English Monarchy on the Church of England in particular," which he preached before the University of Oxford, in May, 1682, the detestable doctrines, which in practice had brought the nation to such an extremity under Charles II. and James, were again promulgated, with an arrogance which had no limits. He stirred up his auditors to religious persecution, as a trumpet calls an army to battle; and De Foe, whose extraordinary literary powers had been already exercised in defence of religion and liberty, had his attention attracted by this and other sermons of a like tendency; for these pulpit orators, not content with a verbal dissemination of such atrocious nonsense, took care to get it licensed and printed as soon as preached. After calling the Dissenters a "confused swarm of sectaries," who, under "the pretence and hypocritical disguise of charity and moderation," would have "debauched its doctrines," that is, of the Church, Sacheverell thus proceeded: "But these shuffling treacherous latitudinarians ought to be stigmatised and treated equally as dangerous enemies to the Government as well as to the Church. For the royal throne and divine altar seem so inseparably joined and united in each other's interests, can only be maintained by the true principles and establishment of the other." * Further on he proceeds, "Presbytery and republicanism go hand in hand—they are but the same disorderly levelling principles in the two different branches of our State. . . . It may be remembered that they were the same band that were guilty both of regicide and sacrilege, that at once divided the king's head and crown. . . . But the nation was sufficiently sensible to whom it owed its preservation, and be it spoke to its eternal honour, the Church of England alone, as distinguished from all its schismatical and domestic enemies, was that great bulwark that buoyed up our lives and liberties, and that by its piety, steadiness, and learning, supported all our sinking fortunes and expiring religion. . . . For how at so great distance soever the Dissenting party may pretend to set themselves from the Papists, they can never deny that they have more than once joined them, both in their aims and counsels, as well to extirpate our Government as to subvert our Church. And as they were the first besotted spawn of that part, so they have ever since been the instruments of

* Grammar, no more than sense, will be found in Sacheverell's Discourses.

their malice, the propagators of their schism and false doctrine, and the panders of that cursed train of mischief that was originally hatched in a conclave, and afterwards brought forth and nursed up in a conventicle. . . . However, others may be seduced and misled, but any pretending to that sacred and inviolable character of being her true sons, pillars, and defenders, should turn such apostates and renegades to their oaths and preferments, such false traitors to their trusts and offices as to strike sail unto a party that is such an open and avowed enemy to our communion, and *against whom every man who wishes its welfare ought to hang out the bloody flag and banner of defiance.*" *

It was this sermon, and other publications of the High Church party, that drew from De Foe his celebrated pamphlet, "The Shortest Way with Dissenters." It was published anonymously, and for a time its inimitable irony so deceived the faction it satirised, that they applauded it in all directions, repeated its arguments in every possible shape, and congratulated one another that such exquisite expression should have been given to their burning zeal for persecution. "I join with the author in all he says, and have such a value for the book," wrote one of these religious firebrands to another, "that next to the Holy Bible, and the sacred comments, I take it for the most valuable piece I have ; I pray God put it in her Majesty's heart, *to put what is there proposed in execution.*" The recommendation thus alluded to was, that instead of fining and imprisoning Dissenters, as in former reigns, their ministers should now be hung, and the people banished. "To talk," wrote De Foe, "of five shillings a month for not coming to the sacrament, and one shilling a week for not coming to church, was such a way of converting people as never was known. It was selling them a liberty to transgress for so much money." As long as the deception lasted, nothing else was heard of but this "Shortest Way," till the Government, alarmed by the excitement of the public mind, sought out the author. To the amazement of the High Church party, it was discovered that he was a Dissenter, and that the whole was a bitter satire against their love of persecution. Their rage knew no bounds ; and the Dissenters, equally mistaken, joined in the general cry against him ; though the public generally were soon at no loss to decipher the object of his irresistible wit. As the principles of the party in power were one with those of the "Shortest Way," and the Bill against Occasional Conformity, was then pending in Parliament, it was resolved to crush the author by a State prosecution. As he had withdrawn from the gathering storm, a proclamation was issued by the Government, and published in the *London Gazette*, for January 10th, 1702-3, offering a reward of 50*l.* for his apprehension. In this, the "Shortest Way" was described as a "scandalous and seditious pamphlet," and De Foe as a "middle-sized spare man,

* The Political Union : a Sermon, p. 15—21.

about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown coloured hair, but wears a wig ; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." This proclamation was little needed, for with a magnanimity worthy of his genius, De Foe surrendered himself, as soon as he found that the printer and publisher of the pamphlet were in custody ; resolving, as he said, "to throw himself upon the Government, rather than that others should be ruined by his mistake." But the Government was bent upon his punishment, and neither submission nor generosity availed. The pamphlet was construed into a libel, and he was indicted at the Old Bailey sessions, February 24th, 1703. The day following, a formal complaint was made in the House of Commons, and some passages being read, the "Shortest Way" was condemned to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman in New Palace Yard ; and there can be little doubt, but what the author would have shared its fate, could the more vehement of the High Church faction have had their desires fulfilled. The trial did not take place till the succeeding July ; and it is probable that in the interval, the Government were at some loss what to do with so able an enemy ; for such a defence as he was likely to make, would be sure to result to their disadvantage. They, therefore, found means to persuade De Foe to throw himself upon the mercy of the queen, and acknowledge the authorship of the "Shortest Way." The result was such as might have been expected. His ready acknowledgment of the fact of authorship was construed into an admission of guilt ; and, the sentence being against him, he was condemned to pay a fine of two hundred marks to the queen, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the queen's pleasure, and find securities for his good behaviour for seven years. This atrocious sentence was carried fully into effect, much to the discredit of the Government, who lost far more than they gained by so flagrant an instance of State persecution.

The first scene of De Foe's punishment was in front of the Royal Exchange, which then faced Cornhill. This place had been probably selected, for the reason, that he had been for some years an inhabitant of Freeman's Court or Yard, at the east end of the Exchange. It was there that he had carried on the trade of a hose-factor ; and it may have been thought that his disgrace would be the more keenly felt in the presence of neighbours, and those passing to and fro with whom he had traded. But it proved an ovation for principles, rather than a punishment. He was attended to the pillory by the populace as if he was about to be enthroned instead of punished ; the pillory itself was hung with garlands of flowers ; he was carefully guarded from all injury ; his health was continually drunk by the surrounding crowd ; and when he descended, acclamations not only rent the air, but the wish was loudly expressed that the Government were then ascending to occupy his place, and he was led away to partake of refreshments which had been provided for him. The succeeding day he was pilloried at the Conduit in Cheapside, and the day but one succeeding at Temple

Bar. This was not punishment, but triumph ; and as De Foe wrote in his "Hymn to the Pillory."

"Shame, like the exhalations of the sun,
Falls back where first the motion was begun ;
And he who for no crime shall on thy brows appear,
Bears less reproach than they who placed him there !"



DE FOE IN THE PILLORY AT TEMPLE BAR.

With the exception of Temple Bar, which is somewhat in the same condition as when De Foe was pilloried in front of it, little more than the mere sites of his residences and places of punishment remain. Freeman's Yard had, in 1850, been

"recently taken down to admit of larger houses and larger rents;" the Exchange was burnt down in 1838, and replaced by the present noble building; and the "Tun," the "Conduit," and the "Standard," have been long lost to Cornhill.*

De Foe, though utterly ruined, in a pecuniary sense, by this atrocious sentence, stood firm, like a second Andrew Marvel, against the offers of the Government to bribe his pen. Happily, genius was true to itself; and the demands of bigotry, which were every hour on the increase, needed such corrective: for, not content with full possession of the endowments of the Establishment, and the exclusion of Dissenters from all participation therein, the High Church party made no secret of their intention with respect to the schools of Dissenters, should the power be theirs—nor, indeed, with respect to the liberty of the press, which, in order to restrain by methods in vogue before the Revolution, they had the effrontery to style "licentious." In this cause De Foe again wielded his all-powerful pen. It was just at this date that the Bill against Occasional Conformity was again defeated—though with such allies as the queen and a Tory ministry, the ecclesiastical party looked forward to golden days for their Church militant; whilst, from their own ascendancy and the spirit which pervaded the Legislature, it might have been supposed that the nation was retracing its steps to former days of priestly domination. But, though the Bill against Occasional Conformity was thus temporarily lost, the Statute of Mortmain was repealed; and to commemorate this accession to ecclesiastical wealth and power, a medal was struck by the order of both Houses of Convocation.

De Foe had been now, for some time, a resident at Stoke Newington. Fleetwood was gone to his last rest in Bunhill Fields; but Sir John Hartopp, his son-in-law, and Dr. Watts, tutor to Hartopp's children, were his contemporaries. These men of similar views must have been known to each other; and the facts that, at this date, the Dissenters of Newington built themselves a meeting-house, and that De Foe was very busy in procuring a refuge in the village for some of the poor Germans that had fled from religious persecution in the Palatinate, lend probability to our supposition. He tried to procure these poor foreigners an allotment of waste land, though unsuccessfully. It was whilst residing here that his prognostications, with respect to the effects of a political religion, and of the doctrine of absolute submission, preached from countless pulpits, were fulfilled. On the 5th of November in that year, 1709, Dr. Sacheverell, now chaplain at St. Saviour's, Southwark, preached another of his famous sermons, the arguments of which were such, as De Foe said, "that if the king commanded my head, and sent his messenger to fetch it, I was bound to submit, and stand still whilst it was cut off."† This celebrated performance was delivered before the city magistrates at St. Paul's, and was entitled the "Perils of False

* Cunningham, p. 192.

† Review, vol. v. p. 75.

Brethren." It was a denunciation, as De Foe well said, against "everything but papists and popery," though "I really think," he adds, "these ecclesiastical faggot-sticks, when they are thus lighted at both ends, do no harm. They awake the people and bring them to their senses; and these senses are their protection against all the high-flying lunaries of the age."* A specimen or two of this inflammatory discourse will be sufficient to prove the lamentable effects of mixing up religious topics with secular affairs, and of making the pulpit, not the place from whence the people should receive their best lessons of peace, charity, and freedom, but of doctrines begot by ignorance and the grossest corruptions of social and political morality. No one can



OLD ARCH, STOKE NEWINGTON.

wade through the majority of Sacheverell's sermons—a thing we have been at pains to do—without some degree of indignation, if an English heart beats in his breast. The term, "False Brethren," Sacheverell had taken from the mouths of Sharp, Archbishop of York, and Atterbury, Dean of Carlisle; and, after calling all Dissenters by this name, and affirming that union of Church and State is the most perfect thing in the world, he thus proceeds with what he styles "a fundamental doctrine," calling those who dissent from it "filthy drones, presumptuous and self-willed men, and despisers of dominion and government." "The grand security of our Government, and the very pillar on which it stands, is founded upon the steady taking of the

* Review, vol. iv. p. 473.

subjects' obligation to absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme power in all things lawful, and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatsoever." "These false brethren in our government do not singly and in private shed their poison, but, what is lamentable to be spoken, are suffered to combine into bodies and seminaries, wherein atheism, deism, tritheism, arianism, with all the hellish principles of fanaticism, regicide, and anarchy, are openly professed and taught, to corrupt and debauch the youth of the nation in all parts of it down to posterity, to the present reproach and future extirpation of our laws and religion. Certainly the Toleration was never intended to indulge and cherish such monsters and vipers in our bosom, that scatter their pestilence at our doors, and will rend, distract, and confound the best settled constitution in the world."* "If such were permitted to enter the Church, it would be a den of thieves. . . . For they are miscreants," "begot 'in rebellion, born in sedition, and nursed up in faction;" "their doctrines crucify God afresh," and the believers in such doctrines must be left "to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," and to "the devil and his angels." This tirade the pulpit masquerader winds up by bidding "the supreme pastors thunder anathemas on their heads."†

Contempt would have been the best punishment for this conceited tool of faction, who, as the Duchess of Marlborough remarked at the time, "had not learning enough to write or speak true English," and who in one of his discourses talks of "parallel lines meeting in a centre." But the temper perhaps as much as the necessities of the times did not permit this. The two Houses of Parliament thought it necessary to notice the doctrines proclaimed from the pulpit by the high clergy; Sacheverell was impeached, and there can be no doubt that the proceedings at his trial effected the grand point of bringing the antagonistic principles of resistance and non-resistance into more conspicuous and decisive conflict. "It matters little what they do with the man," wrote De Foe, "the principle is the plague-sore that runs upon the nation; and its contagion infects our gentry, our clergy, our politics, and the loyalty, zeal, and peace of the whole island." The result of these pulpit-politics he thus admirably states: "These abused notions would subject all our liberties to the arbitrary lust of a single person; they would expose us to all kinds of tyranny, and subvert the very foundation on which we stand; they would destroy, unquestioned, the sovereignty of our laws, which for so many ages have triumphed over the invasions and usurpations of ambitious princes; they would denude us of the beautiful garment of liberty, and prostitute the honour of the nation to the mechanism of slavery; they would divest God of His praise in giving His creatures a right of governing themselves, and charge heaven with having newly subjected mankind to the crime of tyranny."

* *Perils of False Brethren*, by Henry Sacheverell, p. 15.

† *Ibid.* p. 20.

‡ *Review*, vol. iv. p. 476.

The excitement caused by Sacheverell's trial proves how intensely it was a party question; the Whigs on the one hand determining to expose doctrines subversive of all the blessings which the nation had gained by the Revolution; the Tories, more especially the High Church portion of them, making use of it on the other, to uphold, through an advocacy of their champion, the principle of absolute submission. Yet it was well for Sacheverell, as De Foe wrote, "that what he said was not true . . . for the constitution which he has insulted, is now his safety. Had the foundation stood upon the absolute subjection of the subject to the supreme power, he had been left to her Majesty's immediate correction, and she might have sent her guards to convey him from the pulpit to the gallows."*

The proceedings throughout and following this trial, show how little the people are guided by abstract considerations in questions of a political or religious nature. For one of the profoundest evils of ignorance is this—that an inflated demagogue can as much arouse and lead the sympathies of the multitude as a wiser man. This was especially the case throughout the last century, when not even the pretence of education existed for the people. Sacheverell's trial lasted three weeks, during which time he lodged in the Temple, and was daily attended to and from Westminster by an immense mob, who shouted before him, and paid him all the honours of an ambassador of State. When he had retired, to win fresh glory amidst his sympathising friends, this mob divided itself into separate bodies, of two or three thousand each, and proceeding in various directions to the most frequented dissenting meeting-houses, broke open seven of them. The first which came under their vengeance was one in Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn, belonging to Mr. Burgess. They tore down the pulpit and the pews, sacked his house which adjoined the chapel, and made bonfires of the plunder in Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane. It was with difficulty that either building was saved from the flames. In this instance, as in the others, the mob was led by well-dressed persons, who, as proved in the trial of several of the rioters, made themselves conspicuous in the work of destruction; † mounting the pulpits, flourishing the cushions, tearing up the books, and joining in the insane cry of "High Church and Sacheverell." Mr. Earle's meeting-house and dwelling in Long Acre, suffered a like fate, and great havoc was committed at Mr. Taylor's, in Leather Lane, Mr. Bradbury's near Fleet Street, and at another meeting-house in Clerkenwell. A stop was put to these proceedings by the queen's guard, or there is no saying where this party-vengeance may have ended, as the Bank of England was threatened, as well as several of the houses of such bishops as were of the Whig principles. A few ring-leaders were arrested, tried, but subsequently pardoned; whilst those who had incited the riots, nay, in some cases headed the mobs, and who were, as it was well known,

* Review, vol. vi. p. 461.

† State Trials, vol. xv. p. 352.

men of elevated rank, escaped all notice of their atrocious proceedings. These High Church demonstrations of the "Shortest Way" were not confined to London. In various parts of the country the same scenes of lawless violence were enacted. Nor were Dissenters the only objects of insult and outrage. At Wrexham, in Wales, the High Church bigots burnt the effigies of Dissenting ministers, and making one of Bishop Hoadley, whose crime had been his powerful and courageous assertion of the principles of religious liberty, they styled it Ben Hoadley, and after whipping it at a whipping post, drowned it. A performance they would have made real had the times permitted.

In the meanwhile—

" — The sentinel
Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum-bell—
Stands at the bar—absolved by female eyes,
Mingling their glances with grave flatteries
Lavished on *Him* that England may rebel
Against her ancient virtue." *

But if the temporary result fed the insatiable vanity of this weak and pompous tool of faction, and raised the hopes of those who aided and abetted him—if people watched him from their balconies and windows, as though "a prince of peace" were going by—if the adherents of his cause compelled passers-by to shout for "the Church and Sacheverell"—if members of Parliament were reduced to the same necessity—if the queen, on her way to the House of Lords, heard the cry of "God bless your majesty and the Church; we hope your majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell"—if a crowd strove to kiss his hand, and the queen's chaplains supported him by their reverend friendship—yet the managers of the impeachment, alike fearless and confident, did immeasurable service by their spirited and noble expression of the great principles of the Revolution. It proved that the heart of the nation was sound, and the corruption but of a temporary character. Sacheverell was found guilty by a majority of 67 to 59. He received a slight sentence, interdicting him from preaching for three years; this sentence was regarded by his party in the light of a triumph, and Sacheverell was received everywhere with ecstasies of joy; with bell-ringing, bonfires, and illuminations. Preferment from the Crown added to his wealth and dignity; and when some months after his trial he proceeded to Wales to take possession of a living, he was received everywhere on his route as the champion of the Church and order. Corporate bodies went forth in state to meet him; the Tory nobility and gentry received him into their houses; and hundreds of men on foot and horseback guarded his resplendent progress. Nothing was too good or too great for him—no homage sufficient. "With his usual grace," wrote the Duchess of

* Wordsworth, Ecclesiastical Sonnets.

Marlborough, "he received as his due the homage and adoration of multitudes ; never thinking that respect enough was paid to his great merits ; using some of his friends insolently, and raising mobs against his enemies, and giving ample proof of how great meanness the bulk of mankind is capable ; putting on the air of a saint upon a lewd drunken, pampered man ; dispersing his blessings to all his worshippers, and his kisses to some ; taking their good money as fast as it could be brought in ; drinking their best wines ; eating of their best provisions without reserve, and without temperance ; and, what completed the farce, complaining in the midst of this scene of luxury and triumph, as the old fat monk did over a hot venison pasty, in his barbarous Latin, 'Heu quanta patimus pro Ecclesia !' 'Oh, what dreadful things do we undergo for the sake of the Church !'"* It is time to dismiss this contemptible figment in history ; whose honours were won by "dressing well," wearing "clean gloves," "managing a white handkerchief with grace," and by giving himself "pulpit airs."

The immediate result of this trial was disastrous to religious liberty. The Whigs fell from power ; a Tory ministry and a Tory House of Commons succeeded, and the Bill to prevent Occasional Conformity was revived and passed both Houses. The subject of it had been long in agitation ; for though the practice of occasional conformity to the Church was negatived by men of rigid principle like De Foe, it had been sanctioned and practised by Bates, Howe, Baxter, Philip Henry, and others. For this reason, and that it strengthened the hands of those who looked forward to the advent of the House of Hanover, Occasional Conformity was a liberty vehemently denounced by the High Church party. By the Bill against it which was now passed, and under the pretence of preserving the Protestant religion, it was enacted that none should henceforth hold any kind of office without taking the sacrament, or resort to a conventicle, or meeting of Dissenters. "Is it not very hard," asked De Foe, in relation to this question, "that the Dissenters shall be excluded from all places of trust, profit, and honour, and at the same time shall not be excused from those which are attended with charge, trouble, and loss of time ? That a Dissenter shall be pressed as a sailor to fight at sea, 'listed as a soldier to fight on shore, and let his merit be ever so much above his fellows, shall never be capable of preferment so as to carry a halberd ? That we must maintain our own clergy and your clergy, our own poor and your poor, pay equal taxes and equal duties, and not be thought worthy to be trusted to set a drunkard in the stocks ?" He concludes with this biting sarcasm, "We wonder, gentlemen, you will accept our money to carry on your wars !"

Such was some of the fruit of effete opinions in the pulpit, and the attempts of the High Church party to sap the foundation of the Revolution settlement. It was followed by the last and worst measure of this reign—the Schism Bill. For as the

* Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 142, &c.

special object of the High Church party was to prevent the accession, upon the demise of the queen, of the House of Hanover, it was necessary to crush those who had been the consistent advocates of the Revolution and its great principles. It was not enough to deprive Dissenters of offices of honour and trust; they must be robbed of the natural right of educating their own children, and, as it has been well said, "the growing mind of the nation must be delivered up to be trained by exclusive patent under the hands of the Established Church." The Schism Bill "enacted that if any schoolmaster or tutor should be willingly at any conventicle of Dissenters for religious worship, he shall suffer three months' imprisonment, and be disqualified from teaching school for the future." It further enacted "that none other catechism should be taught than that set forth by the Book of Common Prayer." This Bill, which was the production of Lord Bolingbroke, is said to have been much more intolerant when first brought into Parliament; but its worst clauses were modified by Harley. It was vigorously opposed in the Commons by Walpole, Lechmere, and Stanhope. "Instead of making," said the latter, "new laws to restrict domestic, and encourage foreign education, I would wish those against Jesuits mitigated, and allowance made to them to have a certain number of schools." In the Lords the Bill was likewise opposed. But in spite of the most strenuous efforts of the Whigs, and other friends of civil and religious freedom, the Bill was carried by a majority of 237 to 126 in the Commons, and in the Lords by the small number of 7; 33 peers protesting against it, five of whom, to their honour, were bishops. Providence, in His great wisdom, was, however, wiser than intolerant and misjudging men. The day it should have come into operation it was rendered null by the death of the queen, the same event placing a happier race of princes on our throne, who, if not remarkable for large capacity, have been the staunch friends of Protestantism and toleration, instead of the puppets of faction, and the slaves of debased favourites.

The reign of George I. made clear, in some degree, the peril from which the nation had escaped by the timely death of Queen Anne. The Tories and High Church party promoted a rebellion in favour of the Pretender, and the old cry was raised of the "Church in danger." The Crown, in that hour, proved the value and faith of men to whom civil and religious freedom was dear. They stood by the throne; the best and most unflinching of subjects. In return for this, the High Church party in various quarters of the country, insulted the Dissenters, and burnt down their meeting-houses. To restrain this discreditable spirit of faction, an admirable law passed both Houses, for the punishment of those, who, in future, should so transgress. In the fifth year of the same reign, the laws against Occasional Conformity and the Growth of Schism were repealed, though, owing to the opposition of the High Church party, it was found necessary to leave out the clauses relating to the Test and Corporation Acts. These tyrannous infringements of civil and religious rights had to be left to

the spirit of a wiser time. The same High Church party made an attempt to crush Dr. Hoadley, Bishop of Bangor, for the liberal spirit of his writings ; but they were foiled, by the wise determination of the Crown to admit of no persecution. The Convocation, that had been called together for the purpose of condemning Hoadley's writings, was prorogued by command of the king, "it being expedient to scatter a little dust over the angry insects." * Convocation, with this *quietus*, lay dormant till the present reign, when it has been unhappily revived. Unhappily, we say, for religious liberty will never be advanced by semi-political and semi-religious assemblies. Other attempts at persecution, under the cover of the Test Act, were made in the reign of George I., but they signally failed ; whilst the Quakers had, prior to this, viz. in 1696, been delivered from one great source of trouble and vexation, by the acceptance of their affirmation instead of an oath.

In the reign of George II., the clergy of Northampton set up a prosecution against Dr. Doddridge, who kept a dissenting academy in that town. They acted under cover of the old unrepealed Act of the reign of Charles II., which, as we have seen, prevented Dissenters keeping schools unless they would conform to the Church of England. But the king wisely put an end to this prosecution, by the use of his prerogative ; at the same time declaring, "that there should be no persecution for the sake of conscience during his reign." On the other hand, public opinion had advanced but little in liberality, for the attempts made to repeal the Test Act were unsuccessful. Practical religion, however, made a great advance in this reign ; and the preachings of Whitfield and Wesley were a boon to multitudes, whose ignorance and irreligion were, as it is admitted on all hands, a scandal to the Church. The close of this reign was also marked by an event already referred to. In 1748, the Corporation of the City of London made a bye-law, imposing a fine of four hundred and twenty marks upon those persons who, nominated by the Lord Mayor, should refuse to serve the office of Sheriff ; and a fine of six hundred pounds upon those who refused after being elected by the Common Hall. This law had been for some time a source of great injustice to Dissenters, who being unable conscientiously to take the sacrament, from necessity declined office. The fines were, however, invariably inflicted, and, in this way, fifteen thousand pounds had been levied, and appropriated towards the building of the Mansion House. In 1767, Mr. Allen Evans, being elected to the office of Sheriff, refused either to serve or pay the fine. An action in the Sheriff's Court was the result, where judgment was given for the plaintiff. The defendant then appealed to the Court of Hustings, where the judgment was affirmed ; but a further appeal to the Court of the Judges' Delegates, reversed the judgment of the inferior courts. Upon this the City brought a writ of error into the House

* Hallam, Con. Hist. vol. iii. p. 247.

of Lords, and the Judges were directed to give their opinion. It was on this occasion that the great Lord Mansfield delivered his famous speech. A speech as much to his honour, as favourable to the great question of religious liberty. "Conscience," he finely said, in the spirit of Locke and Somers, "is not controllable by human laws, nor amenable to human tribunals. Persecution, or attempts to force conscience, will never produce conviction, and are only calculated to make hypocrites or martyrs. . . . There is nothing certainly more unreasonable, more inconsistent with the rights of human nature, more contrary to the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more impolitic, than persecution. It is against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy." * This speech was so effective, that the Lords immediately affirmed the judgment of the Delegates, thus reversing the judgment of the City courts. The value of this decision can hardly be overstated.

In spite of much opposition, further measures of relief from laws inimical to religious liberty, marked the succeeding reign. The Corporation and Test Acts were happily erased from the Statute Book in 1828, and the succeeding year witnessed the long cried-for justice of the Catholic Relief Bill. Thus one by one the secular chains of religious liberty have been struck off, and the hindrances which remain, await but the peaceful and inevitable extension of a higher standard of education and correlative thought in the great body of the people.

The sylvan solitude of Stoke Newington invites our thoughts again. De Foe remained there during the period of the Sacheverell ferment. He was there in 1715, when he was struck by apoplexy, from which time his connexion with political life was closed. But the griefs of to-day often produce the joys and blessings of the morrow. Thus shut out from party politics and polemics, the great De Foe turned his fancy to a new and more radiant field of literature. Amidst some productions coarse and reprehensible—and no literature is worthy of the name that is not pure—he painted with a master's hand one far-off island in the solitary main, crowned it with woodlands, festooned it with glowing vines, gave it a wide sea-shore, crystal springs, and mountain caves, and set "a footstep in the sand" that will last and be of interest, so long as the language which describes it, endures. What an immortal privilege of genius was this—to paint a landscape for all time !

Robinson Crusoe was published in 1719 ; De Foe still residing at Stoke Newington. In 1721 he paid a fine to be excused serving as a parish officer, on account, undoubtedly, of being a Dissenter. About this time he built himself a handsome house in the village, and here his wife died in 1732. De Foe, himself, died the previous year, and from some unexplained cause, away from home, at a

* Parl. Hist. vol. xvi. p. 325.

temporary residence in the parish in which he was born, that of St. Giles, Cripplegate. He was buried, as we have seen, in Bunhill Fields.

Two years after the death of De Foe, Lady Abney became a resident in Stoke Newington. Dr. Watts died in her house in 1748, and her daughters occupied the same place till the end of the last century, when, at their death, the estate was sold and the residue given "to poor dissenting ministers and their widows." The great philanthropist Howard was also an inhabitant of Stoke Newington in 1750. Here it was he married his landlady, in gratitude to her for kindness through a long illness. Day, the author of "Sandford and Merton," Dr. Aikin, Mrs. Barbauld—whose hymns are, we think, of great beauty, and far excel her prose writings—and the father of Rogers, the poet, are amongst those whose residence have lent interest to Stoke Newington. For, though in our modern days it is shorn of all its ancient solitude and sylvan beauty; though now little more than an extended suburb of the great city; though its picturesqueness, freshness, and quietude, are almost things of the past, Stoke Newington will always be a "hallowed spot" to those who, whilst enjoying the priceless blessings of the toleration and religious liberty of our own day, can reverence the illustrious men, who, for the advancement of these very liberties, died in a dungeon like Eliot, and stood in the pillory like De Foe; for none are morally so great as those who through their labours crush effete tyrannies, or by their pens eradicate effete opinions.

Our work is done. We have passed over many hallowed spots, and touched upon the lives of many men who bore "the heat and burden" of their day wisely and well. Other places remain, other good and illustrious men are unrecorded here; but enough has been said to prove the worth of the blessed civil and religious liberties we enjoy. We have seen how slowly these were gained, and through what "suffering for truth's sake," and we have seen throughout the corrupting influence of all civil and secular relations when brought into connexion with religion. No matter through whose agency such secular power was exercised, whether by Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Independents, or whether through the direct operation of parliamentary enactments, or the influence of places of trust, dignity, and wealth, the result has been the same. We have seen good and wise men fail when intrusted with the authority of defining what *is*, and what *is not*, truth, in an affair so spiritual as that of religion, and concerning points which belong to individual conscience. We have seen laws, excellent whilst applied to civil ends, become sources of corruption and unparalleled abuse when brought to enforce religious rites, opinions, and observances. We have seen philosophic truths, whose natural correlatives are the noblest principles of civil and religious freedom, become themselves corrupted when allied to a power which professes to define what shall and what shall not be believed; and we

have heard men, in their office of ministers of religion, and in the exercise of that authority which place and dignity confer, give utterance to opinions that for submission and venality make us blush for our kind. We have seen these things, and we have learnt how slow has been the evolution of correctives, and how far these have fallen short of the intentions of those who promulgated them, and who, suffering so much that liberty of opinion should flourish, their names become one lengthened roll of martyrology, and the places consecrated by their presence holy ground. It is a thrice hallowed ground, and we have striven to specify this and that locality. Nor, whilst remembering these things, must we forget our own prerogatives of duty—that

“ —Much remains
To conquer still ; Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war,”

and that in an age, which seeks to repress all but stereotyped and recognised formulas of thought, courage in declaring new thoughts and new opinions is even more needed than in the days of old. What is still further needed is individual charity, and a more rigid personal sense of truth, duty, endeavour, and justice ; less selfishness, and more simplicity. In this way, we make in all its secular and religious relations, our daily life—what Milton calls “a noble poem.” Living thus, we worthily reverence past greatness, and as worthily prepare the way for the generations who come after us.

THE END.

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Author Meteyard, Eliza

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